United Nations S/2015/815

Security Council

Distr.: General
26 October 2015

Original: English

Letter dated 22 October 2015 from the Permanent Representatives of Chile and Spain to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

We have the honour to inform you that the Governments of Chile and Spain, in association with the Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect and the Stanley Foundation, held the fifth meeting of the Global Network of the Responsibility to Protect Focal Points in Madrid, on 23 and 24 June 2015.

In this regard, the Governments of Chile and Spain have the honour to transmit to you, in relation to the item on threats to international peace and security, the summary and conclusions of that meeting (see annex).

We should be most grateful if you would circulate the present letter and its annex as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Cristián **Barros Melet**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Chile

(*Signed*) Román **Oyarzún Marchesi**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Spain

15-18649 (E) 291015

Please recycle

Annex to the letter dated 22 October 2015 from the Permanent Representatives of Chile and Spain to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Fifth meeting of the Global Network of Responsibility to Protect Focal Points (Madrid, June 2015)

Introduction

On 23 and 24 June 2015, in Madrid, the Governments of Chile and Spain, in association with the Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect and the Stanley Foundation, hosted the fifth annual meeting of the Global Network of the Responsibility to Protect Focal Points. Senior government representatives from more than 50 countries from all regions of the globe participated in the meeting, together with the Special Adviser of the Secretary-General on the Responsibility to Protect, Jennifer Welsh. The meeting opened with remarks by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs of Spain, Ignacio Ybáñez Rubio, and the Ambassador of Chile to Spain, Francisco Marambio Vial.

Sessions of the meeting focused on the theme of "Ten years of the responsibility to protect: responding to new challenges and threats to vulnerable communities". During the meeting, the responsibility to protect focal points assessed the capacities that their Governments had built nationally and implemented internationally for the prevention of mass atrocities since the adoption of the principle of the responsibility to protect at the 2005 World Summit. The focal points also discussed strategies for responding to new threats to populations, including crimes perpetrated by non-State actors. During the sessions, participants focused on the phenomenon of foreign fighters, the besiegement of minority populations and targeted gender-based attacks, including kidnapping and disappearances.

Six thematic experts — Alex Bellamy of the Asia-Pacific Centre on the Responsibility to Protect; Luis Peral of Club de Madrid; the Special Rapporteur on minority issues, Rita Izsak; Patrick Travers of the Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect; Lauren Wolfe of Women Under Siege; and Saudatu Mahdi, leader of the "Bring Back our Girls" campaign — facilitated the discussions. Participants closed the meeting by reflecting upon ways to deepen ongoing cooperation among responsibility to protect focal points, now that the Global Network has expanded to include more than one quarter of the United Nations Member States.

The present document provides a summary of key issues discussed in Madrid and practical recommendations on the role that responsibility to protect focal points can play in responding to emerging challenges in the protection of civilians and preventing atrocities perpetrated against vulnerable populations.

Ten years of the responsibility to protect: stocktaking and agenda setting

During the opening session, the focal points reflected upon the progress made by the Global Network and its individual members in enhancing preventive capacities at the national and international levels. Participants candidly discussed developments in the field of mass atrocity prevention since the adoption of the 2005 World Summit Outcome, addressing not only the positive commitments made by

various States and organizations but also the practical challenges that the international community continues to face in stopping those crimes and putting an end to those crises around the world.

National commitments

Historically speaking, it is clear that no country is immune to mass atrocities. During the stocktaking exercise, as members of the Global Network described their own national efforts, it was clear that the focus of the conversation was no longer whether and when certain States needed national preventive mechanisms, but rather how everyone was upholding their responsibilities under pillars I and II. Every responsibility to protect focal points acknowledged the necessity of holding a national conversation across ministries focused on policies for the protection of human rights and the prevention of mass atrocities.

Participants discussed a range of national initiatives that they were contributing to as responsibility to protect focal points. Several countries mentioned ongoing interministerial mapping exercises to assess opportunities for mainstreaming mass atrocity prevention into the work of all parts of government. Echoing this, some participants noted that the responsibility to protect influences political decision-making in a range of areas, including the security and justice sectors, as well as trade and development policies. Other participants discussed training for the security sector and raising awareness within government of the challenges of preventing mass atrocities and of accountability when there was a history of such crimes. Several States that had emerged from conflict in the past two decades discussed challenges in structural prevention, noting that while prevention might be easier to talk about than other elements of the responsibility to protect, the process of strengthening institutions that protected human rights took a long time and required government commitment and perseverance.

With regard to State-level pillar II and pillar III responsibilities, some participants discussed how national efforts translated into regional and international behaviour. Training the security sector to better identify risk factors and protect populations facing mass atrocities was noted as an essential preventive step that troop-contributing countries participating in peacekeeping missions should make, regardless of the level of atrocity risk they faced at home. Similarly, States discussed their responsibility to better understand atrocity risk factors and appropriate diplomatic responses when serving on the Security Council, several States calling upon the five permanent members to restrain their use of the veto in mass atrocity situations.

States also discussed taking steps to integrate national efforts into the regional perspective, citing the need, for example, to ensure that the factors assessed in the Framework of Analysis for Atrocity Crimes developed by the United Nations were included in the early warning mechanism of the European Union. Others, notably from Asia and the Middle East, directed their national efforts at encouraging neighbouring States to engage more with issues relating to the responsibility to protect, civilian protection and mass atrocity prevention more generally.

International commitments

The discussion of international commitments focused on conceptual and practical progress made with regard to the responsibility to protect since 2005.

Some participants asserted that, given the ongoing conflicts in the Central African Republic, South Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic and elsewhere, as well as lingering criticism regarding the response in Libya under pillar III, it was easy to overlook positive developments. Nevertheless, they were encouraged by how mechanisms for responding to atrocities had evolved in the 20 years since Rwanda and Srebrenica.

At the present time, 10 out of 16 United Nations peacekeeping missions have a protection of civilians mandate, many including also a specific responsibility to protect component, and initiatives such as the Human Rights Up Front and its action plan underline the importance of leadership by the United Nations Secretariat in preventing mass atrocity crimes.

Many also praised the annual reports of the Secretary-General on the responsibility to protect for clarifying the norm, consistently raising awareness, ensuring continued dialogue on the responsibility to protect and encouraging States and organizations to continue to develop meaningful mechanisms for the prevention of atrocities. One participant noted that, while in September 2005 it was not clear what, if any, follow-up there would be to paragraphs 138 and 139 of the World Summit Outcome, participants should feel encouraged when thinking in practical terms about the national and international developments in early warning, prevention and response that had been seen thereafter.

Finally, in the light of the 2015 "generational reviews" of United Nations peacekeeping, peacebuilding and Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security, as well as the development the Human Rights Up Front action plan and debates surrounding the new Sustainable Development Goals, all participants recognized the critical nature of the responsibility to protect as a cross-cutting issue. The year 2015 had provided ample opportunity for States to assess critically gaps in the capacity to prevent atrocities in a range of priority areas for the United Nations and the broader international community. With the greatest number of refugees since the Second World War and several major conflicts marked by ongoing mass atrocities, the need for the responsibility to protect had arguably never been greater.

Responsibility to protect and non-State actors

Non-State armed groups in various parts of the world are becoming increasingly prominent as perpetrators of mass atrocity crimes. However, as a result of the responsibility to protect being a largely State-based principle, conceptual gaps remain in our collective understanding of how the principle relates to those groups and of how to respond effectively to the atrocities they perpetrate. Nevertheless, States have a responsibility to protect their own population from atrocity crimes perpetrated by violent extremists, to assist others in ensuring protection and to take appropriate action to protect populations from such crimes.

During the session, the focal points explored common themes regarding the responsibility to protect, terrorism and strategies for countering violent extremism, as well as when and how to utilize those different approaches to halt the commission of mass atrocity crimes by non-State armed groups. As some of those groups increase their capacity and even take a quasi-State form, as Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) has done in Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic, responding to those challenges becomes ever more relevant and pressing.

The discussion focused on two primary areas: curbing the means of violent extremists for perpetrating mass atrocity crimes and preventing the radicalization of civilians and their recruitment into violent extremist groups. While there is no single template on how to respond to those threats, as each group and situation requires a tailored approach, there are some commonalities across different cases.

Curbing the means for committing mass atrocity crimes

By definition, non-State armed groups require different measures from those directed at States perpetrating crimes or failing to protect their own population. Mediation and diplomacy, sanctions, referrals to the International Criminal Court and other tools for deterring perpetrators from committing crimes cannot be applied in the same way to violent extremist groups and thus do not have the same impact as they would on a State actor.

Nevertheless, while mechanisms for deterrence and punishment of mass atrocity crimes are difficult to impose, States still have options. By limiting the access that violent extremists have to weapons and other means of perpetrating crimes, States can utilize existing mechanisms to prevent atrocities. These can include implementing procedures for slowing the global flow of arms by ratifying the Arms Trade Treaty. Governments can also reinforce arms agreements by imposing country-specific embargoes and ensuring that mass atrocity risk factors are assessed prior to selling arms to countries where they can be deliberately misused or illegally sold on to non-State actors, or may otherwise fall into the wrong hands.

Constraining the financing of violent extremist groups is also crucial to reducing their capacity to perpetrate mass atrocity crimes. In that context, it is essential to reduce the capacity of non-State groups to exploit and illegally trade in natural resources and heritage artefacts.

In many developing countries, border security is weak, sometimes allowing for the movement of arms, illegal resources and members of non-State groups into their territories. Security forces are often not sufficiently equipped to deter attacks by violent extremists. Countering violent extremism also requires undermining support for networks that armed groups depend upon. This can be achieved, in part, through constructive engagement with local communities.

Finally, some suggested that the Human Rights Council appoint a special rapporteur on countering violent extremism. The rapporteur could help to develop comprehensive approaches to non-State armed groups, including the need for non-military strategies focused on socioeconomic factors that enable non-State armed groups to emerge and proliferate. The rapporteur could also assist in clarifying the distinction between specific acts of terrorism and systematic mass atrocity crimes perpetrated by violent extremist groups.

Crimes perpetrated by non-State actors are a global issue and require a coordinated international strategy to address the challenges they pose. This has to be more than a military strategy and must include a multifaceted approach that addresses socioeconomic gaps. The approach should also involve the constructive management of diversity through structural reforms aimed at ending discrimination, minimizing disparities and promoting equality and inclusiveness among different ethnic and religious groups.

Preventing radicalization

Preventing atrocities perpetrated by non-State armed groups also involves preventing those groups from recruiting new members. This applies to both the radicalization of potential supporters into a local non-State armed group and the rise in foreign fighters joining such groups. In this context, education aimed at promoting social cohesion and highlighting the importance of diversity within society is a key tool in preventing the growth of violent extremism.

States must address the underlying socioeconomic grievances that can sometimes cause individuals to turn to such armed groups. In order for States to develop strategies for addressing violent extremists' actions, they must understand the root causes of conflict both domestically and internationally. One way to better identify those causes is to increase meaningful contacts between Government and civil society, helping to separate violent extremist groups from their claimed constituency.

Without understanding underlying grievances, security responses risk exacerbating existing tensions and may contribute to the further radicalization of sections of the population. In addition, responses must be comprehensive — not strictly military — and security forces should be trained to always undertake proportionate measures aimed at countering violent extremism in ways that remain clearly within the realm of international law.

One identified source of radicalization in some countries experiencing the growing threat posed by violent extremist groups is perceived and actual marginalization and inequality. Governments need to implement policies that encourage social cohesion and promote inclusive national narratives. Since narratives of marginalization and persecution are often central to the recruitment strategies of non-State armed groups, it is essential for Governments to help to build counter-narratives through such mechanisms as interreligious dialogue and intercultural exchange.

This challenge extends to global narratives on countering violent extremism. Marginalization, particularly of ethnic and religious minorities, allows non-State actors such as ISIL to spread their influence and attract foreign fighters.

Vulnerable communities

In many countries, certain communities — notably ethnic and religious minorities — are particularly vulnerable to targeted attacks or are disproportionately affected by conflict-related crimes and violence. Even in the absence of conflict, in some cases those communities are the subject of discriminatory State policies or behaviour that create an environment that is permissive of crimes perpetrated against them. For example, the targeting of vulnerable communities has contributed to a growing international crisis, with the number of displaced persons or refugees at its worst level since the Second World War, and growing numbers of Rohingya Muslims from Myanmar, as well as Syrians and others, fleeing persecution, war and atrocities.

During the session, the focal points discussed means for protecting those communities, discussing recent cases in which populations that had coexisted relatively peacefully were mobilized along religious and ethnic lines after the start of a conflict. The nature of the conflict in the Central African Republic had thus

changed from a political crisis into religious-based violence between armed groups of Christians and Muslims. Participants noted that, in a context of conflicts evolving in that way, the Framework of Analysis for Atrocity Crimes was a useful tool through which to raise awareness of risk factors relating to the use and abuse of identity politics.

States and their partners should increase their awareness of government policies and practices that directly promote discrimination, as well as those that indirectly contribute to marginalization. In Myanmar, for example, discriminatory policies against the Rohingya people, including the denial of citizenship, have contributed to societal attitudes that are permissive of anti-Rohingya mob violence.

National and international actors, including development partners, need to be aware of political trade-offs when providing assistance to certain vulnerable groups. If not properly implemented, support to a vulnerable group may result in perceived bias and reinforce social cleavages, which could entrench protection challenges.

Participants also discussed the growing trend of perpetrators besieging communities as a tactic for targeting minority populations (notably the Yazidis in the Sinjar region of Iraq) and whether the international community had developed stronger mechanisms for responding to besiegement in the 20 years since Srebrenica. The consensus view was that United Nations peacekeepers often still lacked the capacity to protect such communities adequately. Nevertheless, the Security Council had threatened to impose sanctions and passed resolutions urging the lifting of sieges and opening access to humanitarian assistance in response to the widespread use of besiegement tactics in conflicts, such as the civil war in the Syrian Arab Republic.

Structurally, States that uphold good governance and the rule of law and have a functioning democracy have a stronger capacity to promote and protect human rights, including the rights of vulnerable minorities. In addition, taking steps to address inequalities among groups can help societies to avoid some of the triggers for intergroup violence. Adopting policies that foster inclusivity mitigates against the risk factors associated with mass atrocity crimes.

Finally, the Special Rapporteur on Minority Issues stated that responsibility to protect focal points should review the comprehensive set of recommendations from the seventh session of the Forum on Minority Issues, held in November 2014, which focused on preventing and addressing violence and atrocity crimes targeted against minorities.

Unique challenges faced by women in mass atrocity situations

Women and girls are disproportionately affected by displacement and gender-based violence in mass atrocity situations. In many current crises, parties to the conflict have used rape as a weapon of war, while in others the security forces sent to protect populations have sometimes also participated in sexual and gender-based violence.

The systematic targeting of women and girls in conflict has become increasingly prevalent alongside the rise of non-State actors perpetrating mass atrocity crimes. The trafficking of women and forced marriage are a feature of many conflicts, notably the kidnapping and trafficking of women and children perpetrated by Boko Haram in Nigeria. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General on

Sexual Violence in Conflict recently noted that, in Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic, ISIL had institutionalized sexual violence and the brutalization of women as a central aspect of its ideology and operations, using it as a tactic of terrorism to advance its key strategic objectives.

Reflecting upon those threats and bearing in mind the current review of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security, the focal points discussed prevention and protection mechanisms for addressing the specific needs of women, such as added protection from sexual and gender-based violence, improved preventive mechanisms, including accountability for crimes perpetrated against women, and greater provision of recovery measures, particularly in refugee and displacement camps, where women are especially vulnerable.

Participants discussed three specific measures for preventing and responding to crimes against women. First, many countries and peacekeeping missions lack adequate psychosocial and health care to recover from the consequences of sexual violence and kidnapping. Improving post-atrocity response to crimes against women should include strengthening those mechanisms. Second, security forces need proper training in both the protection of women from gender-based violence and the consequences of committing those crimes themselves. This is particularly important in militarized conflicts, such as that in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where the security forces have previously been one of the main perpetrators of sexual violence. Finally, post-atrocity response and accountability would be improved if commissions of inquiry included a gender dimension or a gender-based violence expert.

One of the core pillars of resolution 1325 (2000) was to call upon national, regional and international institutions to increase the participation of women in decision-making and in mechanisms for conflict prevention and resolution. Since the adoption of that resolution, the number of women peacekeepers has increased and more than 40 States have adopted national action plans on women and peace and security.

Participants also learned from the example of the "Bring Back Our Girls" campaign in Nigeria about how women's peace initiatives could trigger greater government response and transparency, as well as draw international attention to a mass atrocity situation. Nevertheless, in some States, women continue to be prevented from playing a role in their own protection. As one participant noted, peace processes in many countries emerging from crisis have not included female participants, fewer than 20 per cent of peace agreements contain reference to women's issues and less than five per cent of money spent on security sector reform has a specific gender objective.

Way forward: key recommendations

The fifth meeting of the Global Network of Responsibility to Protect Focal Points featured critical conversations regarding atrocity prevention and emerging civilian protection challenges. The following are recommendations for States to consider:

(a) Each State should recognize the responsibility to protect as a cross-cutting issue. Governments should encourage interministerial dialogue on mass atrocity prevention;

(b) Each State should provide training on minority rights and the protection of vulnerable populations, including the special protection needs of women in conflict. Such training should be offered to the security sector and across relevant ministries;

(c) In developing and "fragile" States, there is often a need to extend State authority to peripheral areas of the country. It is also important to develop mechanisms for empowering civil society to address local grievances and strengthen preventive mechanisms;

(d) All States should sign and ratify the Arms Trade Treaty to help to curb the flow of small arms to non-State actors;

(e) Encouraging the United Nations and the Human Rights Council to utilize the Framework of Analysis for Atrocity Crimes when reporting on conflicts, particularly in reports of commissions of inquiry and updates by the Secretary-General to the Security Council on country situations;

(f) Supporting the possible appointment of a special rapporteur on countering violent extremism;

(g) Fostering a mass atrocity focus within dialogues on related international norms and policies, ensuring in particular that the responsibility to protect is included in relevant conversations in the Human Rights Council and within regional organizations;

(h) Encouraging regional organizations to institutionalize mass atrocity prevention by means of their early warning mechanisms;

(i) When serving on the Security Council, balancing the protection needs of civilians with operational capacity when establishing mandates for peacekeeping operations, ensuring that the responsibility to protect lens is applied to conflicts or crises where mass atrocities are occurring or are a threat.

Conclusions

The fifth meeting of the Global Network of Responsibility to Protect Focal Points occurred during a critical moment for reflecting upon lessons learned from the first 10 years since the adoption of the responsibility to protect principle. The discussion was of particular importance in helping responsibility to protect focal points to frame their thinking about the progress that their States have made, but also the ongoing implementation challenges that the international community continues to face.

The discussion on how to respond to non-State actors and vulnerable populations encouraged the focal points to think practically about how to prevent and protect in the face of new and emerging challenges and threats. As one participant noted, in order to show that the norm does not only address yesterday's news, there must also be success stories about adaptation to new challenges, and focal points benefit from the Global Network addressing the future implications of unprecedented needs.

United Nations S/2015/816

Security Council

Distr.: General
26 October 2015

Original: English

Letter dated 23 October 2015 from the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit to you the attached letter from the National Coalition of Syrian Revolution and Opposition Forces (see annex).

I would be most grateful if you would circulate the present letter and its annex as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Matthew **Rycroft**

15-18639 (E) 261015

Please recycle

Annex to the letter dated 23 October 2015 from the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

On behalf of the National Coalition of Syrian Revolution and Opposition Forces, it is with great alarm that I draw your attention to the dire humanitarian situation inside Syria and the growing toll of the Russian Federation's campaign of indiscriminate military aggression, which has thus far resulted in over 231 civilian casualties. As members of the Security Council prepare for their upcoming briefing on the implementation of Security Council resolutions 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014) and 2191 (2014), it is critical that Member States condemn Russia's indiscriminate slaughter in the strongest terms, and take the measures necessary to ensure that such atrocities do not go repeated.

On 30 September 2015, Russian Federation forces initiated a campaign of indiscriminate aerial attacks on the opposition-held provinces of north-west Syria. Over the past three weeks, civilians and civilian objects — including bread distribution points, civilian homes, places of worship and displaced peoples camps — have repeatedly been the subject of Russia's indiscriminate aerial attacks. Among Russia's targets have been the provinces of Homs, Idlib, Aleppo, the Damascus countryside, Hama and Deraa, where, in addition to deploying more than 297 air strikes, Russian forces have launched surface-to-surface missiles and cluster munitions.

Contrary to the claims of the Russian Federation, its intervention is not designed to counter terrorist extremist groups like ISIS, but rather to facilitate the Assad regime's war on civilians and eliminate Syria's moderate opposition forces. According to data compiled by Syrian Civil Defence rescue workers, since 30 September 2015 more than 436 Syrian civilians have been killed in Syria, among them 55 women and 63 children. More than half of these civilian deaths are directly attributable to Russian air strikes (see enclosure).

The notion that Russian air strikes are targeting ISIS is a fallacy. To date, just 7 per cent of Russian air strikes have targeted ISIS-held areas. The bulk have targeted areas controlled by the Free Syrian Army. Worse — Russia's air strikes have not merely avoided extremist targets, they have in fact directly benefited ISIS.

Since the onset of Russia's intervention in Syria, ISIS extremists have made some of their most significant territorial gains to date. In Aleppo, ISIS forces have exploited Russian strikes against the moderate opposition, who were combating ISIS, to stage their most important military advance since August 2014. Russia's intervention is a further radicalizing factor on the ground.

Russian air strikes are helping extremism. They are also fuelling mass displacement and the refugee crisis. Tens of thousands of civilians are currently fleeing a joint Syrian regime-Russian offensive in opposition-held areas south of the city of Aleppo. Under the cover of Russian air power and with the support of Iranian militia and Hizbullah terrorists, regime forces are emptying entire villages of their residents, leaving thousands without shelter, food or medical support.

But Aleppo is not the only province to sustain coordinated attacks by Russian and Syrian forces. Rural areas in Homs and Hama and the north coastal province of

Latakia have also sustained joint offensives by Syrian regime and Russian forces. In the south-western districts of Aleppo city and Hama, some 85,000 people have been driven from their homes as a consequence of Russian and Syrian attacks.

Russia's military aggression in Syria is not merely worsening the humanitarian crisis in Syria, it is also violating international humanitarian law. Russian strikes are taken with total disregard for civilians and civilian objects, in direct violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War and Security Council resolution 2139 (2014), which demands that "all parties immediately cease all attacks against civilians, as well as the indiscriminate employment of weapons in populated areas, including shelling and aerial bombardment, such as the use of barrel bombs, and methods of warfare which are of a nature to cause superfluous injury or unnecessary suffering".

Russia's war crimes in Syria must stop. So too must those of the Syrian regime. For that reason, the Syrian National Coalition asks that members of the Security Council take the following steps:

- **Condemn** in the strongest terms Russia's military aggression in Syria, including its indiscriminate aerial bombardment which overwhelmingly affects civilians;
- Direct the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to **monitor Russian violations** of international humanitarian and human rights law and request that the Secretary-General report to the Council on the impact of Russia's aggression in Syria;
- Protect civilians across Syria by enforcing a **no-bombing zone** that will deter future aerial attacks by both the Syrian regime and the Russian Federation. Should the Council fail to take the measures needed, then it is incumbent upon Member States to take the required action.

Indiscriminate aerial bombardment remains the single greatest killer in Syria and the number one threat to Syrian civilians. Stopping indiscriminate aerial bombardment would save lives. It would help stem the refugee crisis. And it would help counter extremism. It would also contribute to the political transition process and provide the leverage needed to bring the Syrian regime to the negotiating table. The Syrian National Coalition remains committed to the full implementation of the Geneva Communiqué, and we are committed to ensuring that all of our fellow Syrians live in a future Syria that is inclusive, democratic and governed by the rule of law. Civilian protection — not more bombing by the Russian Federation — is the best and most effective way to achieve this goal.

(*Signed*) Najib **Ghadbian**
Special Representative to the United Nations
National Coalition of Syrian Revolution and Opposition Forces

Enclosure

Humanitarian impact of Russian air strikes in Syria, 30 September to 17 October 2015

(*Source*: Syrian Civil Defence)

- Russia conducted **297 air strikes** across north-west Syria, in Homs, Idlib, Aleppo, the Damascus countryside, Hama and Deraa.
- **231 civilian deaths** due to Russian air strikes in Syria, including 38 women, 34 children and 3 Syrian Civil Defence ("White Helmets") rescue workers.
- Russian air strikes accounted for **53 per cent of all civilian deaths** in Syria from 30 September to 17 October.
- Only **7 per cent** of Russian air strikes have targeted ISIS.
- Since the onset of Russian air strikes, **ISIS has staged significant advances**, including in Aleppo.
- As many as **40,000 people** fled northern rural Hama in Syria after Russian and regime forces launched a co-offensive in opposition-held areas.
- Russian air strikes have preponderantly targeted **civilian objects**, including civilian homes, bread distribution points, camps for internally displaced persons, farms and fields.

United Nations S/2015/817

Security Council

Distr.: General
26 October 2015

Original: English

Letter dated 22 October 2015 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to refer to the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID). Following the usual consultations, it is my intention, as well as that of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, to appoint Martin Ihoeghian Uhomoibhi (Nigeria) as the African Union-United Nations Joint Special Representative for Darfur and Head of UNAMID, with responsibilities including those of African Union-United Nations Joint Chief Mediator.

Mr. Uhomoibhi succeeds Abiodun Oluremi Bashua (Nigeria), to whom Ms. Dlamini-Zuma and I wish to reiterate our deep appreciation for his dedicated service during his tenure as Acting Joint Special Representative and Head of UNAMID and Joint Chief Mediator ad interim.

I would be grateful if you could bring this matter to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) **BAN** Ki-moon

15-18647 (E) 271015

Please recycle

United Nations S/2015/818

Security Council

Distr.: General
26 October 2015

Original: English

Letter dated 26 October 2015 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to inform you that your letter dated 22 October 2015 (S/2015/817) concerning your intention, as well as that of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, to appoint Martin Ihoeghian Uhomoibhi (Nigeria) as your Joint Special Representative for Darfur and Head of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) has been brought to the attention of the members of the Security Council. They take note of the intention expressed in your letter.

(*Signed*) Román **Oyarzun Marchesi**
President of the Security Council

15-18648 (E) 271015

Please recycle

United Nations S/2015/819

Security Council

Distr.: General
26 October 2015

Original: English

First report of the Secretary-General pursuant to paragraph 7 of resolution 2233 (2015)

I. Introduction

1. In paragraph 7 of its resolution 2233 (2015), the Security Council requested that I report every three months on progress made towards fulfilling the mandate of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI). The present report covers key developments related to Iraq and provides an update on the activities of the United Nations in Iraq since the issuance of my report dated 13 July 2015 (S/2015/530).

II. Summary of key political developments pertaining to Iraq

A. Internal developments

2. During the reporting period, the Government of Iraq began implementing widespread reform measures to strengthen its democratic institutions and to address economic and budgetary problems by strengthening State institutions, reducing public expenditures, countering corruption and initiating economic reforms. The political leadership of Iraq continued consultations and steps to promote initiatives on national reconciliation at various levels and also continued to exert efforts to engage some Sunni leaders in the fight against the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). In the Kurdistan region of Iraq, following the expiration of the presidential term of Masoud Barzani, political parties were locked in intensive negotiations to reach agreement on the President's term and powers, while also continuing the drafting of a constitution for the Kurdistan region of Iraq.

3. Partners participating in the international anti-ISIL coalition continued to support the fight of the Government of Iraq against the terrorist group. During the reporting period, neither side made significant gains. ISIL remains in control of large swathes of territory in the west and north of the country, where it continues to inflict civilian casualties, cause massive displacement and perpetrate systematic human rights violations that may amount to war crimes and/or crimes against humanity.

15-17917 (E) 281015

Please recycle

B. Political situation

4. In July, when the country was experiencing record high temperatures and repeated electricity cuts, popular demonstrations erupted to protest the poor delivery of services in Baghdad and the southern governorates. By early August, the demonstrations had grown in strength and numbers. The protests have recurred each Friday and are led by civil society groups and young people, who are demanding better services, better governance and an end to government corruption and mismanagement. The protesters' demands for reform gained momentum when, on 7 August, Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani urged Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi to take decisive action against corruption, improve the Government's performance, reduce public sector expenditure and publicly name officials who are impeding reforms.

5. On 9 August, Prime Minister al-Abadi announced a reform plan to address the economic and social needs of Iraq, counter corruption and strengthen democratic institutions. The plan included downsizing the Government to reduce public expenditure and improve State performance, abolishing the posts of Vice-President and deputy prime ministers as well as a number of senior officials in various ministries, reducing their salaries, protecting services, and judicial reform. The reform plan was unanimously endorsed by the Council of Ministers just hours after the Prime Minister's announcement. On 11 August, the Council of Representatives unanimously approved Prime Minister al-Abadi's first package of reforms and its own reform package to complement the Prime Minister's measures. The Council of Representatives also stated that the reforms should be in conformity with the Constitution of Iraq and other laws.

6. Following the endorsement by the Council of Representatives of the reform packages, Prime Minister al-Abadi began reducing the number of Government personnel. On 16 August, he ordered the immediate abolishment of his deputies' posts, the reduction of the Council of Ministers from 34 to 22 members and the dissolution of the Ministries of Human Rights, Women's Affairs, and Municipalities and Public Works. He also ordered the merging of Ministries with similar specialized functions: Science and Technology with Higher Education and Scientific Research; Environment with Health; Municipalities and Public Works with Housing; and Tourism and Antiquities with Culture. On 20 August, the Prime Minister announced a 90 per cent reduction in the number of personnel dedicated to providing protection for Government officials. On 9 September, he announced the dismissal of 123 senior officials from their posts. They were to either retire or have their administrative status adjusted.

7. The Prime Minister also took steps to formalize the abolition of the posts of the Vice-Presidents. On 20 August, he ceased the payment of their financial entitlements and on 15 September, the Council of Ministers submitted to the Council of Representatives a draft law to abolish their posts. All three Vice-Presidents publicly stated that they considered the abolition of their posts unconstitutional.

8. The Government took steps to initiate inquiries into allegations of political corruption. On 15 August, the Presidency of the Council of Representatives referred to outstanding cases of corruption against staff in the Ministries of Defence and Commerce concerning the award of arms contracts. The day before, the Chairman of the Integrity Commission, Hassan al-Yassiri, had announced that travel bans had been instituted against those under investigation for corruption.

9. As part of national reform efforts aimed at cutting public expenditure, on 9 September, the Prime Minister authorized the reduction of salaries and pensions for the three presidencies, ministers' advisers and managers. To diversify sources of national income amidst declining world oil prices, on 25 August, the Council of Ministers approved the allocation of 5 trillion Iraqi dinars ($4 billion) to revitalize agriculture, industry and the housing sector, encourage investment and create job opportunities. The Council of Ministers also allocated funds to the Ministry of Electricity to equip power stations with adequate fuel in order to alleviate the electricity crisis.

10. Leadership changes were also effected at the governorate level amidst demands by local protesters for efficient service delivery and improved State performance. On 28 August, Governors Ibrahim al-Miyali of Muthanna and Ammar al-Midani of Qadisiya resigned after protesters called for them to step down. On 14 September, the Muthanna Provincial Council elected Falah al-Zayadi (State of Law Coalition) as the new Governor. On 17 September, President Fuad Masum issued a decree endorsing the election of Luay al-Yassiri (State of Law Coalition) as the Governor of Najaf after the former Governor's appeal against his dismissal for financial misappropriation was dismissed by the local administrative court on 24 August. On 5 October, the Ninewa Provincial Council elected Nawfal Hamady Sultan al-A'akoob as the new Governor to replace Atheel al-Nujaifi. The latter's dismissal by Parliament was upheld by the administrative court in Ninewa on 28 August.

11. The Legislature also took steps to strengthen accountability and openness in governance through the initiation of public inquiries into the fall of Ramadi and Mosul and through the enactment of legislation. On 16 August, Prime Minister al-Abadi announced that he would request that military commanders identified by the investigation committee as having abandoned their positions in Ramadi be court-martialled. On 17 August, the Council of Representatives voted to refer the parliamentary investigation committee's report on the fall of Mosul to the General Prosecutor. On 27 August, the Council of Representatives unanimously adopted the Political Parties Law, which will provide greater openness in the operation of political parties.

12. During the reporting period, the ruling bodies of Iraq took further steps to reinvigorate the country's national reconciliation agenda. On 4 July, the Committee of Religious Endowments and Religious Affairs of the Council of Representatives launched its initiative for national reconciliation entitled the "Ramadan document" to complement the objectives set out in the national political agreement and the ministerial programme. The main goal of the initiative is to empower representatives from all components, State and religious institutions, community leaders and the media to promote the principles of national reconciliation. In early July, the Implementation and Follow-Up Committee for National Reconciliation of the Office of the Prime Minister shared with the three presidencies its action plan entitled the "Baghdad document". The document is aimed at garnering commitments from all components inside and outside Iraq, including groups outside the political process, to advance an inclusive national reconciliation process. On 23 August, the Prime Minister issued an executive order for the formation of a committee and subcommittees tasked with implementing national reconciliation in the Baghdad Belt area by monitoring human rights abuses, addressing public complaints and disputes between local communities, establishing communications mechanisms with

residents to ascertain their concerns and promote community reconciliation. On 5 and 18 September, the Implementation and Follow-Up Committee for National Reconciliation held consultations with local residents and community leaders to identify their main areas of concern. Other initiatives to advance a broad and inclusive reconciliation process were also announced by Iyad Allawi, the Office of the Presidency, the Association of Muslim Scholars and the Iraqi Communist Party.

13. At the same time, the Sunni political leadership of Iraq made efforts to promote national reconciliation initiatives at various levels. In a bid to aid community reconciliation and achieve a balanced political representation in mixed governorates, Parliamentary Speaker Salim al-Jubouri held discussions with the head of the Badr Organization, Hadi al-Ameri, on a draft law on peaceful coexistence in Diyala. On 19 August, an Anbar liberation conference was held in Baghdad under the auspices of the Speaker as part of efforts to engage Sunnis in the fight against ISIL and prepare for post-liberation in Anbar. As part of efforts to strengthen unity among Sunni leaders, including those outside the political process, in early August, the Speaker's Office submitted to Iraqi Forces Coalition Members of Parliament a road map on national reconciliation entitled "Sunni Vision for the Iraqi State". On 30 August, the Sunni Endowment Council held a conference on combating violence and extremism. Participants included political, tribal, community and intellectual leaders. They released an outcome statement, which included calls for Muslim unity and the rejection of sectarianism.

14. Most of the priority legislation that would aid national reconciliation, however, remained pending in Parliament. Votes on the national guard law were postponed on 30 August and again on 7 September owing to disagreements between parliamentary blocs over its provisions. Additionally, no progress was made towards the enactment of a general amnesty law since its first reading on 5 July. Meanwhile, the National Reconciliation Committee of the Council of Representatives separated the Justice and Accountability and Banning of the Baath Party Act into two bills on 25 July. While the Council of Representatives concluded, on 30 July, the first reading of the draft law on the banning of the Baath Party, dissolved entities and parties, and the activities of racism, terrorism and *takfir* (charge of unbelief), no voting took place on legislation that would revise de-baathification measures. On 15 September, the Council of Ministers decided to withdraw and review all draft laws submitted to the Council of Representatives by the previous Government. This amounted to some 80 draft bills, including the draft anti-terrorism law of 2005.

15. Following the expiration of the presidential term of Masoud Barzani on 19 August, the political parties of the Kurdistan region of Iraq held eight rounds of talks on the issue of the presidency between 18 August and 8 October. The Kurdistan Democratic Party of President Barzani is seeking an extension of the presidential term with the current presidential powers and an election by direct vote, while the Gorran Movement, the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, the Kurdistan Islamic Union and the Kurdistan Islamic Group propose that the Regional Parliament elect the president. Inter-party talks were continuing at the time of reporting.

16. On 19 August, the Kurdistan Region Constitutional Drafting Committee formally requested the Kurdistan Regional Parliament to extend its mandate after holding consultations for 90 days and approving 74 articles of a new draft regional constitution. The Turkmen and Assyrian Christian members of the 20-member

Constitutional Committee continued to boycott the Committee, citing its rejection of their party's proposals on minorities.

17. During the reporting period, differing views between Baghdad and Erbil persisted with respect to the implementation of the agreement of 2 December 2014 on energy exports and revenue-sharing. In July, the Kurdistan Regional Government called for a new agreement that would better address the needs of both sides. Following those calls, federal Oil Minister Adel Abdul-Mahdi visited President Barzani in Erbil on 26 July in an attempt to reach common ground. The political leadership in Baghdad and Erbil continued to express their commitment to political dialogue to resolve their differences.

C. Security

18. The security situation in Iraq remained highly volatile throughout the reporting period. Conflict and armed violence were largely concentrated in contested areas in Anbar, Ninewa and Salah al-Din Governorates. The Government of Iraq and the Kurdistan Regional Government continued to focus their military operations on consolidating territorial gains made against ISIL and on gradually recovering areas remaining under ISIL control with the increased support of the international coalition.

19. In Anbar, the Iraqi security forces, the popular mobilization forces and affiliates, aided by international coalition air strikes, undertook military operations to dislodge ISIL from its strongholds and safe havens in the province, mainly in and around Ramadi, Fallujah, Garma and Hit. The role of local Anbari forces participating in the operation to retake Ramadi, which was captured by ISIL in mid-May, was augmented by 6,000 Sunni tribesmen, who underwent military training in July. The first contingent of 1,000 Sunni tribesmen who had completed training was deployed to the front lines in late July to join the Government's military campaign against ISIL. Meanwhile, Government forces retained control of the town of Haditha and held on to the strategically important Haditha dam. Although ISIL launched daily attacks against the Iraqi security forces in the town of al-Baghdadi, Government forces and affiliates continued to retain control of the area. In an attempt to cut off a vital financing resource for ISIL, on 16 July, the Ministry of Interior announced the closure of the Trebil border crossing between Anbar and Jordan, at which ISIL had been imposing a tax on each truck entering and exiting the province.

20. In Salah al-Din, the Iraqi security forces and popular mobilization forces retained control of the city of Tikrit and surrounding areas. Armed clashes between Government forces and affiliates and ISIL continued throughout the reporting period, particularly in Samarra, Tikrit and Baiji. From 1 July to 12 September, ISIL launched 27 suicide vehicle-borne attacks in Baiji, resulting in substantial casualties to security personnel. Armed clashes continued between Government forces and ISIL within the perimeter of the Baiji refinery, which is still under ISIL control.

21. Peshmerga forces, supported by the popular mobilization forces and international coalition air assets, continued to exert pressure on ISIL positions in Sinjar and Ninewa. On 11 September, the Peshmerga, aided by the popular mobilization forces, retook 11 villages from ISIL in the area of Daquq, south of Kirkuk, followed by 12 villages west of Kirkuk on 30 September. Recaptured areas,

including the Khabbaz oilfield, key infrastructure and road junctions remained under Peshmerga control.

22. Baghdad continued to be afflicted by acts of violence and terrorism, almost on a daily basis. The deadliest attack occurred on 13 August, when a bomb was detonated at a market in the Jameela area of eastern Baghdad, reportedly killing at least 45 civilians and wounding 72 others. During the reporting period, there was a re-emergence of the use of under-vehicle improvised explosive devices, with 52 such attacks killing 43 civilians and wounding 68 others. Unidentified bodies continued to be found on a daily basis in the city and its outlying areas. In many cases, the mode of killing suggested sectarian or political motivations. Abductions also continued to occur in and throughout the city. On 2 August, 10 Palestinians were abducted in eastern Baghdad and, on 2 September, 18 Turkish workers were abducted, reportedly by an armed group, in eastern Baghdad and released several weeks later. On 9 September, the acting Deputy Justice Minister, another senior official of the Ministry of Justice and four security guards were abducted in north-eastern Baghdad. The security guards were reportedly later released.

D. Regional and international developments

23. During the reporting period, the Government of Iraq continued to pursue its efforts to strengthen its relations with its neighbours, other countries in the region and the broader international community. High-level Iraqi Government delegations paid official visits to Egypt, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Jordan, Kuwait and Turkey as part of continuing efforts to enhance cooperation in the fight against ISIL, seek support in alleviating the economic and humanitarian situation, promote the national reconciliation agenda and support the Government's reform programme. These developments took place amidst the signing, on 14 July, of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, which is intended to ensure that the nuclear programme of the Islamic Republic of Iran remains peaceful. The senior political leadership of Iraq welcomed the agreement and stated that its full implementation would contribute to regional and international peace and security. In early July, Iraq's new Ambassador to the Islamic Republic of Iran, Rageh al-Musawi, arrived in Tehran.

24. Iraq continued its efforts to normalize relations with member States of the Gulf Cooperation Council. During a meeting with his Iraqi counterpart on 22 July, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Kuwait, Sheikh Sabah al-Khalid al-Hamad al-Sabah, reaffirmed his Government's commitment to bolstering bilateral ties with Iraq. Saudi Arabia reaffirmed its intention to reopen its embassy in Baghdad and a consulate in Erbil. Iraq appointed its new Ambassador to Saudi Arabia on 20 September. Iraq's relations with Qatar became strained after the latter's initiative to host meetings of some Iraqi Sunni leaders in Doha on 2 and 3 September in an effort to engage them in the Baghdad-led national reconciliation process. In a statement on 6 September, the Iraqi Ministry of Foreign Affairs said that it had not been consulted by the Government of Qatar and underlined that the sovereignty of Iraq must be respected. On 11 September, Qatar announced the appointment of its new resident Ambassador to Iraq in preparation for the upcoming reopening of its embassy in Baghdad. The Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iraq, Ibrahim al-Jaafari, described the announcement as a positive sign.

25. Following the suicide bombing on 22 July in Suruc, Turkey, claimed by ISIL, and the assassination of two police officers in Ceylanpınar, Turkey, claimed by the Kurdistan Workers Party, the Government of Turkey confirmed on 25 July that it had carried out air strikes targeting ISIL in the Syrian Arab Republic and the Kurdistan Workers Party in northern Iraq in response to the terrorist attacks. The same day, the Prime Minister of Turkey spoke to Kurdistan Regional Government President Barzani and the President of Turkey spoke to President Masum about those counter-terrorist operations. On 27 July, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Turkey stated that his country was respecting international law and the Charter of the United Nations in conducting air strikes in the Syrian Arab Republic and Iraq while being very careful about avoiding civilian casualties.

26. On 1 August, Prime Minister al-Abadi called upon the Government of Turkey to respect the sovereignty of Iraq and, on 5 August, Minister for Foreign Affairs al-Jaafari underlined that his Government had not granted Turkey authorization to carry out air strikes within Iraq's territory. In a statement on 13 September, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Iraq condemned all terrorist attacks against Turkish civilians and personnel, but described any incursion into Iraqi territory as a violation of Iraq's sovereignty. The Kurdistan Regional Government called for a halt to the confrontations and urged for the continuation of the peace process.

27. The international community continued to work with Iraq on formulating a response to combat violent extremism. Minister for Foreign Affairs al-Jaafari, along with the Deputy Secretary-General and my Special Representative, participated in the International Conference on the Victims of Ethnic and Religious Violence in the Middle East, held in Paris on 8 September. The Conference brought together representatives from 56 countries and 11 international and regional organizations. Participants adopted the Paris Action Plan, a road map guiding the international community's response in protecting communities targeted and threatened for ethnic or religious reasons in Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic by ISIL and other terrorist organizations.

28. The situation in Iraq and counter-terrorism efforts were also part of the discussions at the 144th ordinary session of the Council of Foreign Ministers of the League of Arab States, held on 13 September. Meanwhile, the Global Coalition to Counter ISIL continued to discuss ways to support the Government of Iraq. On 30 July, a small group meeting of the Global Coalition to Counter ISIL was held in Quebec City, Canada, and attended by Minister for Foreign Affairs al-Jaafari and my Special Representative. Coalition partners emphasized that stabilization and national reconciliation were interlinked and praised the United Nations for its stabilization efforts, including, in particular, the establishment by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) of the Funding Facility for Immediate Stabilization in Iraq.

29. In late September, Prime Minister al-Abadi confirmed that the Government of Iraq was sharing intelligence with the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Russian Federation, the Syrian Arab Republic and others in the fight against ISIL and that it hoped that the various countries and coalitions would coordinate closely in their support to Iraq.

III. Update on the activities of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq and the United Nations country team

A. Political activities

30. During the reporting period, UNAMI continued to work in close partnership with the Government of Iraq to support its efforts to strengthen inclusive political dialogue and governance. My Special Representative met with a wide range of interlocutors to follow up on the implementation of the national political agreement and ministerial programme, including efforts to advance the national reconciliation agenda.

31. My Special Representative and Deputy Special Representative for Political Affairs also paid numerous visits to the Kurdistan region to urge Kurdish interlocutors to resolve the deadlock over the Kurdistan Regional Presidency and to support dialogue with the federal Government on energy exports and revenue-sharing.

32. On 7 September, a seminar on the theme "Devolution as part of national reconciliation" was held in Baghdad. The seminar, which had been jointly organized by UNAMI and the Office of the Prime Minister, was attended by more than 120 Government officials and civil society leaders, who discussed how the devolution of powers could support national reconciliation in Iraq and shared perspectives and approaches to federalism. UNAMI, in collaboration with the Implementation and Follow-Up Committee for National Reconciliation, organized a conference on the role of public opinion-makers in supporting political and community reconciliation, which was held on 16 September. More than 100 prominent media, academic and civil society figures participated. Recommendations included developing media strategies to promote social and cultural reconciliation and means through which opinion-makers can positively contribute to the advancement of national and societal reconciliation. An ad hoc committee was established from among the participants to follow up on the implementation of the recommendations. Additionally, on 19 August, UNAMI conducted a joint mission to Diyala with the Implementation and Follow-Up Committee on National Reconciliation of the Office of the Prime Minister to discuss national and community reconciliation objectives with local authorities, community leaders and returnees.

33. To promote support and cooperation with the Government of Iraq, my Special Representative also engaged with representatives of Iraq's neighbours and States in the region. He visited Jordan on 14 and 15 July and Turkey on 18 September. At the invitation of the Government of Qatar, he joined the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Qatar in addressing, on 4 and 5 September, a series of meetings among Iraqi Sunni leaders to discuss means of unifying the Sunni community behind Iraq's national reconciliation process. My Special Representative delivered key messages to the participants, including urging for their support for the unity of Iraq and the national reconciliation process, respect for the Constitution and the political process, and their outright rejection of terrorism and ISIL.

34. My Special Representative also reached out to Iraq's minority communities to explore means of enhancing the protection and promotion of their rights, meeting Sheikh Sattar Jabbar al-Hillo, spiritual leader of the Sabean-Mandaean community, and Yazidi spiritual leader Baba Sheikh at Lalish Temple in Sheikhan (Dohuk Governorate). In preparation for the aforementioned International Conference on the

Victims of Ethnic and Religious Violence in the Middle East, held in Paris on 8 September, my Deputy Special Representative for Political Affairs took part in a United Nations brainstorming session organized by the Department of Political Affairs of the Secretariat and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) on the topic "Victims of ethnic and religious violence in the Middle East", held in Paris from 20 to 22 July.

35. UNAMI continued its efforts to promote women's rights in Iraq in support of the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000). With the State Ministry of Women's Affairs and the Kurdistan Region High Council of Women's Affairs, it jointly organized a two-day national conference on the theme "Empowering women to address the impact of terrorism", held in Erbil on 3 and 4 August. Key Government officials, religious leaders, civil society representatives and representatives of the international community participated. Recommendations from the conference included the need to accelerate efforts to release women and girls abducted by ISIL from captivity and provide comprehensive services for women affected by conflict.

B. Electoral assistance

36. During the reporting period, UNAMI continued its engagement with Iraq's electoral and legislative institutions. On 13 September, my Special Representative met with the Board of Commissioners of the Independent High Electoral Commission to discuss priority areas for the continuation of electoral assistance, taking into consideration the recommendations of the 2015 electoral needs assessment mission. Following consultations, UNAMI and the Independent High Electoral Commission agreed on focus areas of electoral support, including election results management, voting processes for internally displaced persons, database and voter registry, a legal framework, the registration of political parties and gender. UNAMI is now in the process of recalibrating technical assistance capacities to fulfil the identified requirements.

37. UNAMI also continued to follow up on the progress in discussions between the Independent High Electoral Commission and the Kurdistan Independent High Electoral Commission in defining their respective roles and responsibilities. The chairpersons of the two electoral institutions separately informed my Deputy Special Representative in August that progress had been made in defining a memorandum of understanding between the two electoral management bodies.

38. On 13 June, the Kurdistan Regional Presidency issued a decree scheduling the presidential election on 20 August. During its briefing for the diplomatic community held in Erbil on 19 August, the Kurdistan Independent High Electoral Commission reiterated its earlier statements that it needs at least 180 days from the day funds are released and the electoral law is passed to organize an election in the region. On 8 September, the Chairperson of the Kurdistan Independent High Electoral Commission requested the support of UNAMI in establishing the Commission's data entry centre, setting up its election results management system and conducting capacity-building workshops.

39. On 26 July, the Independent High Electoral Commission announced the receipt of a new request from citizens of Basra to designate the province as a region. Following an audit of the names and signatures in support of the request against the Commission's voter registry for Basra, the Commission announced on 18 August

that the valid names and signatures reached the two per cent required threshold for the first step of the process, as provided in the Law on the Formation of Regions (Law No. 13 of 2008). A total of 57,933 Basra citizens signed the request, 46,212 of whom matched the Commission's voter list, or 2.6 per cent of Basra's 1,741,599 registered voters. Pursuant to that, the Commission prepared and submitted to the Council of Ministers an operational plan and budget for the process. To date, however, there is no budgetary allocation to fund succeeding activities.

C. Human rights developments and activities

40. Ongoing armed conflict, acts of violence and terrorism continue to take a grave toll on civilians in Iraq. From 13 July to 16 September, UNAMI recorded a minimum number of 4,785 civilian casualties (1,739 killed and 3,046 wounded), bringing the total number of civilian casualties in Iraq since the beginning of 2015 to at least 18,457 (6,123 killed and 12,334 wounded).

41. UNAMI received numerous reports alleging serious violations of human rights and international humanitarian law perpetrated against civilians in an apparent widespread and systematic manner, in particular by ISIL. The reports include attacks directly targeting civilians and civilian infrastructure, killings, abductions, rape and other forms of sexual violence, forced recruitment of children, wanton destruction and looting of civilian property, and denial of fundamental rights and freedoms. Members of minorities, women, children, people with disabilities and the elderly remain particularly vulnerable. It is estimated that up to 1,500 women and children, mostly from the Yezidi community, remain in captivity by ISIL.

42. The deadliest direct attack against civilians took place in Diyala Governorate on 17 July as celebrations of Eid al-Fitr commenced. A vehicle laden with explosives was detonated in the market of Khan Bani Saad Subdistrict, killing at least 108 civilians (including 3 police officers) and wounding 167 others (including 7 police officers). At least 20 people, mainly civilians, were reported missing and have, to date, not been found. ISIL claimed responsibility on social media for the attack. A similar attack took place on 10 August when a suicide bomber driving a vehicle laden with explosives targeted a crowded market just outside Baquba City, killing at least 61 people and wounding at least 88 others, including 4 children. ISIL also claimed responsibility for that attack.

43. ISIL continued to abduct, kill and punish those opposed to its ideology and rule. This included religious leaders, former public sector employees, journalists, lawyers, academics and students, former election candidates, members of the Iraqi security forces and the popular mobilization forces, and persons associated with political parties that oppose it. Examples include the public execution in Ramadi in July of eight civilians accused of cooperating with the Iraqi security forces; the abduction of 53 employees of the Independent High Electoral Commission in Mosul on 24 July, 28 of whom were killed the following day; the public execution of the Imam of the Hamid Mosque in Mosul for allegedly criticizing the terrorist group; and the public execution of a journalist in Mosul in August. Also in Mosul in August, ISIL posted a list of over 2,000 names of individuals whom it claimed to have executed. ISIL also murdered four journalists and executed five persons alleged to have been associated with the Mutahidoon Alliance (including three female Mutahidoon Alliance candidates).

44. ISIL also continued to abduct civilians and destroy buildings of cultural and religious significance. In the aftermath of an improvised explosive device attack targeting ISIL members in Hawija District of Kirkuk on 18 August, ISIL abducted at least 90 civilians in Hawija between 2 and 7 September. On 22 August and 12 September respectively, ISIL also demolished two Syrian Orthodox churches in Mosul.

45. ISIL continued to impose strict travel restrictions within its areas of control, including Mosul, Hawija and Shirqat. Trade in and out of Mosul is still very limited, as ISIL requires merchants to identify a sponsor and provide property as surety when travelling in order to ensure their return. ISIL also shut down most Internet services in Mosul around mid-August. Four families (at least 20 people) died from starvation and dehydration while fleeing ISIL through the Hamrin Mountains in Salah al-Din Governorate on about 15 July. On 19 and 20 July, an undetermined number of families were reportedly abducted by ISIL in the Hamrin Mountains. ISIL also reportedly killed civilians accused of smuggling people out of areas under its control.

46. UNAMI also continued to receive reports alleging that pro-Government armed groups and militias had perpetrated human rights violations. Members of the Sunni Arab community were targeted in particular, primarily in Diyala. On 12 August, approximately 50 members of the Sunni Arab community were abducted in Baquba District, Diyala Governorate; at least 17 of the bodies were found in the Diyala River later the same day. Many of the abductions reportedly took place at or near checkpoints manned by Iraqi security forces and associated forces. On 1 September, militia members allegedly abducted at least 40 persons of Sunni Arab origin near Balad District, Salah al-Din. The fate and whereabouts of the abductees are unknown. Reports were also received of persons in Peshmerga uniform destroying homes and structures in Sunni Arab-inhabited areas in Jalawla, Diyala Governorate, on or around 16 August.

47. The country task force on monitoring and reporting, co-chaired by UNAMI and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), documented 96 incidents of violations against children during the reporting period. The United Nations has noted a decrease in the number of reported incidents owing to lack of access to the affected populations and increased displacement. Killing and maiming continued to be the most documented violation, with 331 reported cases of child casualties (135 killed and 196 wounded). Fighting between the parties to the conflict reportedly claimed the lives of 63 children, while terror attacks killed 72 children and wounded another 99, mostly in Diyala and Baghdad.

48. ISIL continues to recruit children in Ninewa, particularly in Mosul and Tal Afar, and in Anbar. ISIL posted pictures and videos on social media showing boys being trained and boys perpetrating crimes, including killing, maiming and/or torturing civilians. ISIL also reportedly killed some of its underage fighters. On 18 August, ISIL murdered 18 juveniles in Mosul for having fled the front line in Anbar. In addition, the continued recruitment and use of children by affiliates of the popular mobilization forces in conflict areas, Baghdad and Basra remain of grave concern. Children are also reportedly participating in combat operations alongside the popular mobilization forces in Anbar and Ninevah.

49. On 12 August, the Kurdistan Regional Government executed three persons convicted in April 2014 of the abduction and murder of two girls. They were the

first executions to have taken place in the Kurdistan region of Iraq since the Kurdistan Regional Government introduced an informal moratorium on the implementation of the death penalty in 2008. The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights expressed his deep disappointment at this development later in August and urged the Kurdistan Regional Government to recommit to and formalize its unofficial moratorium on the use of the death penalty.

50. Iraq continues to be proud of its culture of freedom of expression and aims to set an example for the region. However, during the reporting period, UNAMI again received an increasing number of reports of demonstrators and journalists being harassed or assaulted by unidentified persons. UNAMI also received reports of journalists being harassed by security forces or persons associated with them during public demonstrations against corruption and poor public services in Baghdad on 7, 14 and 21 August. Two media professionals were assaulted during a similar demonstration in Karbala Governorate on 14 August. On 17 July, security forces in Basra reportedly fired on demonstrators, killing one protester and wounding three others, and on 22 August, unidentified armed men attacked protesters in front of the Basra Provincial Council.

D. Camp New Iraq and Camp Hurriya

51. The relocation of the remaining Camp Hurriya residents to safe and secure locations outside of Iraq remains the only durable and sustainable solution for those residents. Funding for the United Nations on-site monitoring of camp activities is set to expire in the coming months. Without further funding, human rights monitoring will all but cease.

52. On 4 August and 14 September, my Special Representative reiterated the commitment of the United Nations to the existing memorandum of understanding between the Government of Iraq and the Organization during meetings with the Government committee in charge of Camp Hurriya. He also gave assurances that the United Nations would continue its human rights and humanitarian monitoring and reporting.

53. My Special Adviser for the Relocation of Camp Hurriya Residents Outside of Iraq, Assistant Secretary-General Jane Lute, paid an official visit to Baghdad on 14 September, during which she briefed the Government committee on progress in relocating the residents and outlined measures to help to strengthen the process. During the meeting, the Government agreed to continue to work with the United Nations to find relocation opportunities and to reconsider permitting representatives of the diplomatic community in Iraq to visit the camp. Meanwhile, the United Nations will continue to explore ways to encourage States to assist the Government of Iraq to relocate the remaining Camp Hurriya residents to safe and secure locations outside the country.

54. Notwithstanding challenges throughout the relocation process, namely, the group's intermittent boycott of the process, momentum has been established. To date, the humanitarian claims of all residents have been reviewed by the United Nations and more than 800 individuals have found solutions either through readmission or relocation to third countries. The current objective is to relocate an additional 300 residents by the end of 2015, bringing the total number of residents

who have departed Iraq to 1,100. This figure represents more than one third of the residents registered by the United Nations.

E. Humanitarian assistance, reconstruction and development

55. Over 8.6 million people across Iraq, or nearly 25 per cent of the country's population, remain in urgent need of humanitarian assistance. This includes 3.2 million people displaced from their homes and spread across more than 3,400 locations. These figures reflect an increase of more than 400,000 persons in need since my previous report, in addition to the 250,000 Syrian refugees already hosted in Iraq.

56. Through the generous support of many donors, the United Nations, its partners and the Government have continued to assist the most vulnerable across Iraq, with an average of 2 million people receiving food, medical, shelter, water and protection assistance every month. However, funding for the humanitarian response does not match the ever-expanding needs in Iraq. It currently covers only 52 per cent of those needs for the entire year and only 40 per cent of the funding requirements of the highly prioritized appeal for the period from July to December 2015. United Nations agencies and humanitarian organizations will soon be forced to suspend or terminate hundreds of lifesaving programmes and activities owing to a lack of funds.

57. To ensure that vital food assistance continues, the World Food Programme (WFP) has been forced to reduce the value of food vouchers and the size of food rations. Approximately 300,000 displaced persons received food vouchers in August and a reduced value voucher covering September and October requirements. An additional 824,000 beneficiaries were supported through in-kind assistance. Emergency assistance provided by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) boosted the vegetable production for rural populations in Sulaymaniyah, Kirkuk and Anbar, with particular attention to households headed by women, benefiting 4,050 households.

58. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and partners continued to monitor checkpoints to assist civilians, provided legal assistance to 76,400 internally displaced persons and assessed the needs of 127,000 persons. The psychosocial programme of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) delivered counselling sessions reaching 12,402 persons, with a majority of beneficiaries from minority groups. UNICEF supported psychosocial services for 70,000 displaced and refugee children. The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) continued to support women's centres, which provided gender-based violence information and services to 29,530 women and girls. UNFPA further strengthened the capacities of 16 uniformed personnel to combat gender-based violence. UNDP provided financial assistance to six court-based legal aid help desks in Baghdad, Basra, Erbil, Sulaymaniyah and Dohuk and six legal assistance centres within refugee and internally placed person camps in Erbil and Dohuk.

59. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) continued to provide shelter for 113,000 internally displaced persons in 17 camps across Iraq, built three new camps and completed the renovation of 122 collective centres and 1,250 family shelter units. In August, the United Nations Human Settlements Programme handed over to local authorities prefabricated shelter units and infrastructure facilities, housing 1,824 internally displaced persons in Bahirka

Camp, Erbil. IOM assisted 65,382 displaced individuals through the distribution of 10,725 seasonal non-food kits, 658 tents and 345 caravans. As at late September 2015, UNICEF, WFP, IOM, UNFPA and nine non-governmental organization partners had delivered combined lifesaving assistance through the rapid response mechanism to an estimated 3.6 million recently displaced and vulnerable people, including in hard-to-reach areas of Anbar, Salah-al-Din, Diyala and Kirkuk.

60. UNICEF supported over 7,000 households through its emergency cash assistance programme, UNHCR distributed cash assistance to 4,600 displaced families, and IOM further provided 2,990 with transport.

61. UNICEF reached more than 78,000 children with routine measles vaccinations and supported access to growth monitoring and nutrition services for 144,000 conflict-affected children. Aiming towards polio-free status, UNICEF, the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Ministry of Health marked National Polio Immunization Day from 4 to 8 October, targeting 5.9 million children under five years old. While Iraq was removed from the list of polio-infected countries in May 2015, a joint UNICEF-WHO assessment mission in August could not establish the non-existence of residual poliovirus circulation in Iraq, largely owing to the lack of effective surveillance mechanisms in high-priority areas of Baghdad and Najaf.

62. Notwithstanding substantial investment by the Government of Iraq, the damage inflicted to the health and water sanitation infrastructure rendered the system so vulnerable that a major outbreak of cholera occurred in Najaf and Baghdad Governorates in September. With the support of the United Nations, the Ministry of Health was able to contain the outbreak, which as at 7 October had nevertheless affected more than 1,200 people, who survived because of adequate treatment.

63. UNFPA supported 21 maternity units and 80 primary health-care units, leading to 3,596 assisted deliveries. IOM supported 18,041 displaced persons, 820 host community residents and 201 health-care professionals by facilitating access to primary health care; building the capacity of the national health-care system; providing supplies; and establishing mobile and static health-care clinics. With the support of WHO and health cluster partners, 2,658,691 beneficiaries received health care through medical consultations.

64. UNESCO provided secondary education to 14,500 internally displaced persons in camps and host communities and built a prefabricated school in Sulaymaniyah on 23 August with a capacity for 500 students. UNESCO and the Iraqi authorities, including Kurdish regional representatives, jointly coordinated and monitored the final examinations of displaced students in public universities. In August, UNESCO and UNICEF provided assistance to the education system, benefiting more than 25,000 displaced children and young people, and constructed prefabricated schools for 15,000 displaced children.

65. UNDP supported the efforts of the Government of Iraq to stabilize areas liberated from ISIL, particularly in and around Tikrit, through the Funding Facility for Immediate Stabilization. Several infrastructure projects identified by local authorities are under way in the sectors of water, electricity, health and education, targeting 85,000 beneficiaries among the 133,000 people who have returned to Tikrit. It is estimated that the previous population of Tikrit was 200,000. On 24 August, a cash-for-work project that through a UNDP partnership with local non-governmental organizations employs 200 persons daily for public infrastructure

rehabilitation was begun. The United Nations Office for Project Services continued the operation of the Information Centre, an inter-agency initiative funded by UNHCR, WFP and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs of the Secretariat. More than 850 displaced persons accessed the Information Centre to receive information and advice on accessing humanitarian services.

66. FAO assisted 4,000 Syrian refugee households in Dohuk and Erbil with food for livestock. UNFPA supported seven primary health-care facilities in refugee camps, which assisted in 1,107 births. UNICEF leveraged specific support to cover the salaries of Syrian refugee teachers and UNESCO provided secondary education for 4,500 refugees. WFP assisted some 50,000 refugees per month with in-kind and voucher support, following a comprehensive food security and vulnerability assessment conducted in July. WHO ensured uninterrupted provision of medicine and medical supplies in the camps and host communities.

67. From mid-September, UNESCO, together with the Ministry of Education, began preparations for the establishment of the Iraqi National Curriculum Centre. UNESCO also continued to provide technical assistance and capacity-building for the conservation and management of cultural heritage in Iraq. Under the capacity-building programme of the Iraq-European Union-IOM Jointly Run Advanced Assisted Migration Initiative, 1,063 officials were trained on the integration of displaced population, the reintegration of returnees, land and property dispute resolution and border management systems to combat irregular migration, and 10 assessments on labour migration and combating trafficking in persons were conducted. The IOM community policing project facilitated discussions and created training curriculums for police.

F. Security and operational issues

68. Despite continued interest, the United Nations has yet to conclude its status of mission agreement for UNAMI. The absence of such an agreement continues to hamper the effectiveness of United Nations operations. Notwithstanding the volatile security environment in Iraq, United Nations operations are ongoing. One locally recruited UNHCR staff member abducted on 26 September was released on 3 October as a result of the efforts of the Iraqi security forces. Regrettably, no progress has been made regarding the UNAMI staff member abducted on 26 April, whose whereabouts remain unknown. I strongly urge the Government of Iraq to undertake every effort to secure his release.

69. During the reporting period, UNAMI continued to support the activities of the United Nations country team on a cost-reimbursable basis and the building of new accommodation to increase the amount of living space. To address growing passenger traffic between Baghdad and other hubs, especially Erbil, the Mission added a 19-seater turbo prop aircraft to its fleet.

70. The Government of Iraq is continuously reviewing the security arrangements in Baghdad, including those relating to the area known as the Green Zone. UNAMI is monitoring the developments and maintains close contact with the relevant authorities for ensuring that the safety and security of its personnel, premises and operations will not be negatively affected by the changes implemented.

G. Implementation of the recommendations of the strategic assessment mission

71. In its resolution 2233 (2015), the Council requested that I report in further detail on my recommendations to revise and prioritize the tasks of UNAMI. The Mission has commenced a process towards implementing the priority activities in full consultation with the Government of Iraq and in response to its needs and the evolving situation in the country. I met with Prime Minister al-Abadi in New York on 30 September and discussed, inter alia, how the United Nations could support his reform agenda, including in the field of anti-corruption. We also agreed that the Government of Iraq would include the Sustainable Development Goals in its economic and environmental policies with the support of the United Nations and the United Nations country team. Similarly, we agreed that the United Nations and the Government of Iraq would cooperate on the development and implementation of the United Nations plan of action on countering violent extremism.

72. In addition, my Special Representative and his deputies engaged with the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Ibrahim al-Jaafari, and other high officials of the State. The delivery of humanitarian assistance to people in need continues to be a challenge, given the acute financial constraints. The United Nations humanitarian system continues its efforts to obtain the necessary support for urgent humanitarian actions.

73. My Special Representative has redoubled efforts to promote political dialogue through a series of initiatives aimed at national reconciliation. In addition, given the urgent need for greater mine action in Iraq, UNAMI has facilitated the work of the United Nations Mine Action Service. Internal assessments have also been undertaken to determine the areas in which rule of law assistance could be provided. Furthermore, in order to enhance the overall effectiveness of such activities through the collective effort of the United Nations presence in Iraq, the process of articulating an integrated strategic framework has commenced. This process is aimed at better situating the political, humanitarian, human rights and developmental objectives and activities of UNAMI and the United Nations country team, guided by a common strategic vision for Iraq anchored on an updated situational analysis, in support of the Iraqi people and their desire for peace. Also, the existing United Nations Development Assistance Framework will be revisited in line with the evolving priorities of Iraq and the United Nations system, informed by Security Council resolution 2233 (2015).

IV. Observations

74. Amidst an unstable security environment in an Iraq increasingly fraught with economic, social and other structural challenges, the Iraqi people have peacefully made their voices heard and called upon the Government to improve State performance, governance and counter-corruption. Reforms that eliminate corruption, streamline State institutions, bring much-needed expertise to the Government and improve the delivery of services to the people of Iraq constitute important steps to reinforce trust and confidence in the Government and the future perspectives of Iraq and its people, with a positive impact towards strengthening national unity and accelerating reconciliation. It is essential that the Government capitalize on this opportunity and popular goodwill to implement meaningful

reforms. I therefore welcome the endorsement by the Council of Representatives of these reforms and underscore that the path towards reforms in Iraq requires broad political cooperation and consultations. Moreover, the Government must continue to enable the Iraqi people to peacefully raise their voices to shape their future. To that end, the Government of Iraq must do its utmost to ensure that the right of citizens to freedom of expression and assembly is fully respected and protected.

75. It is vital that the Government of Iraq continue its fight against ISIL, for which it needs increased and more effective support from countries in the region and the broader international community, above all the international anti-ISIL coalition.

76. At the same time, the Government, political forces and civil society of Iraq should not lose sight of the need to proceed with national reconciliation towards an historic settlement. The Government's reforms must therefore be accompanied by continued efforts to promote an inclusive Iraqi political system and to counter radical ideology. I urge the political leadership of Iraq and community and religious leaders to work closely to align their efforts in that regard. I also urge political blocs to reach agreement as soon as possible on legislation that will support the national reconciliation process and Iraq's political leadership to sustain its efforts to strengthen support for the fight against terrorism.

77. It is vital that the political leadership of Iraq remain unified to address the many challenges facing the country. I therefore urge political blocs in the Kurdistan region of Iraq to reach, without further delay, a compromise on the presidency of the Kurdistan Regional Government. I further reiterate my call upon Baghdad and Erbil to remain committed to negotiations in an effort to reach soon a mutual understanding on their joint agreement on energy exports and revenue-sharing, as well as a comprehensive, fair and constitutional solution to all other outstanding issues.

78. I condemn in the strongest possible terms the ongoing killing, kidnapping, rape and torture of Iraqis by ISIL, as well as its recruitment and use of children and systematic destruction of irreplaceable cultural heritage. I remain appalled by the ongoing targeting, by ISIL, of minority communities and those opposed to its ideology, including the murder of election candidates and journalists. I urge the Government of Iraq to do its utmost to bring those responsible to justice. I also remind all parties engaged in the fight against ISIL that military operations must be conducted with the utmost care to avoid civilian casualties and the violation of the rights of civilians, in full respect for international law, including fundamental human rights and humanitarian law. I further underscore the need for all relevant parties in the region, while implementing counter-terrorism, peacebuilding and conflict resolution activities, to take into account the protection of women and girls at risk of sexual violence.

79. Conflict in Iraq continues unabated, causing mass internal displacement. Iraq now has the third highest population of internally displaced persons in the world, with 3.2 million people having been displaced since January 2014. The recent arrival in Europe of tens of thousands of Iraqi refugees from across the region confirms the dire humanitarian conditions that millions of Iraqis now face. Hundreds of thousands could follow unless more is done to alleviate the suffering of the more than 8 million Iraqis who need our help, including internally displaced persons. Mindful of the forthcoming winter, a rapid investment to improve conditions in the camps and in the communities generously hosting displaced families regardless of their ethnicity and faith would provide an effective alternative

to what otherwise could result in a continuous outflow of Iraqis. With the conflict intensifying, an additional 1.4 million people may need lifesaving assistance before the end of 2015. However, humanitarian activities in Iraq continue to be severely underfunded. Of the $498 million requested under the United Nations humanitarian response plan for Iraq launched in June for the second half of 2015, only 34 per cent has been funded to date. I therefore appeal to the regional and international partners of Iraq to urgently contribute to the United Nations humanitarian response plan.

80. The stabilization and rehabilitation of liberated areas must remain a priority for the Government of Iraq, particularly in the light of the alarming rate of Iraqis fleeing war, persecution and poverty to seek refuge abroad. It is paramount that the Government continue to implement measures to ensure the return of the displaced to their places of origin by restoring and enforcing law and order in those areas and rebuilding basic infrastructure. The United Nations remains committed to continuing to assist through its good offices and the Funding Facility for Immediate Stabilization.

81. Lastly, I should like to extend my thanks to my Special Representative, Ján Kubiš, and the staff of the United Nations in Iraq for their tireless efforts in supporting the Government of Iraq. They continue their dedicated support and assistance to the Government of Iraq and to all the Iraqi people. I trust that international partners, including Iraq's neighbours, will continue to support my Special Representative in the implementation of his mandate.

United Nations S/2015/820

Security Council

Distr.: General
26 October 2015

Original: English

Letter dated 26 October 2015 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit herewith the twenty-fifth monthly report of the Director-General of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), submitted pursuant to paragraph 12 of Security Council resolution 2118 (2013) (see annex). The present letter covers the period from 23 September to 21 October 2015.

With respect to the destruction of the 12 chemical weapons production facilities, I am pleased to note that the sixth of the seven hangars was destroyed with the additional required explosives that were recently procured for that purpose. The destruction of this sixth hangar has been verified by OPCW. The verified destruction of six hangars and five underground structures leaves one remaining hangar to be destroyed. I have been informed that, unfortunately, the final hangar continues to be inaccessible, owing to the prevailing security situation.

I also note the significant progress made in destroying all chemicals declared by the Syrian Arab Republic, with the resumption of the remaining destruction activities, which are expected to be completed before the end of 2015.

Last month, the OPCW Declaration Assessment Team submitted a note to the OPCW Executive Council regarding the work, outcomes and status of outstanding issues related to the Syrian initial declaration. In taking note of this report, the Executive Council requested the OPCW Director-General to report to it, before its eighty-first session in March 2016, on the details of all unresolved issues, in particular those for which no further progress has been made. Accordingly, the work of the Assessment Team will continue.

As I stated in my previous letter (S/2015/737), the activities of the OPCW fact-finding mission that is investigating allegations of the use of toxic chemicals as weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic are continuing. Following the completion of this work, the findings are expected to be submitted to the Director-General before the end of October. I take note of the Director-General's intention to attach these findings to his next monthly report.

Preparations are ongoing for the OPCW-United Nations joint investigative mechanism, established under Security Council resolution 2235 (2015), to become operational as soon as all core staff have been recruited and enough funds raised through voluntary contributions to support the material and technical needs of the mechanism. The leadership panel of the mechanism, which is composed of the head of the mechanism and her two deputies, began its work on 24 September 2015.

Please recycle

The identification of those responsible for the use of toxic chemicals as weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic is of the utmost importance. Those responsible for their use must be held accountable. Those who would consider making use of such weapons in the future must be deterred by the certain knowledge that such acts will not be overlooked and that such actors will be held accountable by the international community.

I would be grateful if you could urgently bring the present letter and its annex to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) **BAN** Ki-moon

Annex

I have the honour to transmit to you my report entitled "Progress in the elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons programme", prepared in accordance with the relevant provisions of decision EC-M-33/DEC.1 of the Executive Council of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and Security Council resolution 2118 (2013), both dated 27 September 2013, for transmission to the Security Council (see enclosure). My report covers the period from 23 September 2015 to 21 October 2015 and also covers the reporting requirements of Executive Council decision EC-M-34/DEC.1, dated 15 November 2013.

(*Signed*) Ahmet **Üzümcü**

Enclosure

Note by the Director-General of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons

Progress in the elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons programme

1. In accordance with subparagraph 2 (f) of the decision by the Executive Council (hereinafter "the Council") at its Thirty-Third Meeting (EC-M-33/DEC.1, dated 27 September 2013), the Technical Secretariat (hereinafter "the Secretariat") is to report to the Council on a monthly basis regarding the implementation of that decision. In accordance with paragraph 12 of United Nations Security Council resolution 2118 (2013), the report by the Secretariat is also to be submitted to the Security Council through the Secretary-General.

2. The Council, at its Thirty-Fourth Meeting, adopted a decision entitled "Detailed requirements for the destruction of Syrian chemical weapons and Syrian chemical weapons production facilities" (EC-M-34/DEC.1, dated 15 November 2013). In paragraph 22 of that decision, the Council decided that the Secretariat should report on its implementation "in conjunction with its reporting required by subparagraph 2(f) of Council decision EC-M-33/DEC.1".

3. The Council, at its Forty-Eighth Meeting, also adopted a decision entitled "Reports of the OPCW fact-finding mission in Syria" (EC-M-48/DEC.1, dated 4 February 2015).

4. This, the twenty-fifth monthly report, is therefore submitted in accordance with the aforementioned Council decisions, and includes information relevant to the period from 23 September to 21 October 2015.

Progress achieved by the Syrian Arab Republic in meeting the requirements of EC-M-33/DEC.1 and EC-M-34/DEC.1

5. Progress within the reporting period by the Syrian Arab Republic is as follows:

(a) Regarding the 12 chemical weapons production facilities (CWPFs) in the Syrian Arab Republic, the sixth of the seven aircraft hangars was destroyed with the recently procured explosives, while the seventh hangar remained inaccessible during the reporting period due to the security situation. The Secretariat has verified all five underground structures and six hangars as destroyed.

(b) On 13 October 2015, the Syrian Arab Republic submitted to the Council its twenty-third monthly report (EC-81/P/NAT.1, dated 13 October 2015) regarding activities on its territory related to the destruction of its chemical weapons and CWPFs, as required by paragraph 19 of EC-M-34/DEC.1.

(c) The Syrian authorities have continued to extend the necessary cooperation in accordance with the implementation of subparagraph 1 (e) of EC-M-33/DEC.1 and paragraph 7 of United Nations Security Council resolution 2118 (2013).

Progress in the elimination of Syrian chemical weapons by States Parties hosting destruction activities

6. Significant progress has been made in destroying all the chemicals declared by the Syrian Arab Republic, which were removed from its territory in 2014. A combined total of 98.9 per cent of all declared chemical weapons has been verified as destroyed, which includes the isopropanol previously destroyed in the Syrian Arab Republic, 100 per cent of the Category 1 chemicals, and 94.5 per cent of the Category 2 chemicals. Also, facilities in Finland and Germany have destroyed all effluents produced by the neutralization process of sulphur mustard and DF that took place on board the United States vessel MV Cape Ray. As at the cut-off date of the report, a total of 55 per cent of the remaining Category 2 chemical, hydrogen fluoride (HF), has now been destroyed. Veolia ES Technical Solutions, LLC in the United States of America resumed its destruction activities during the reporting period after having completed the implementation of its technical solution to ensure the safe processing of the badly corroded HF cylinders. The Secretariat will continue to brief States Parties in The Hague on this activity, which is expected to be completed before the end of the year.

Activities carried out by the Secretariat with respect to the Syrian Arab Republic

7. The Secretariat continued its cooperation with the United Nations Office for Project Services in the context of the OPCW Mission in the Syrian Arab Republic, and is in the process of finalizing arrangements to continue such cooperation to support that mission. Three OPCW staff members were deployed as part of that mission as at the cut-off date of this report.

8. The Director-General has continued to communicate with senior representatives of the States Parties hosting a destruction facility or providing assistance with the destruction of Syrian chemical weapons, and with senior officials of the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic. As requested by the Council at its Seventy-Fifth Session (paragraph 7.12 of EC-75/2, dated 7 March 2014), the Secretariat, on behalf of the Director-General, has continued to brief States Parties in The Hague on its activities.

9. The Secretariat and the Syrian authorities have maintained their ongoing cooperation on outstanding issues regarding the Syrian initial declaration, as encouraged by the Council at its Seventy-Sixth Session (paragraph 6.17 of EC-76/6, dated 11 July 2014). The Declaration Assessment Team (DAT) completed its eleventh visit to the Syrian Arab Republic as previously reported, and the Secretariat issued a Note entitled "Report on the Work of the Declaration Assessment Team Covering the Period April 2014 to September 2015" (EC-80/P/S/1, dated 25 September 2015), covering the DAT's tenth and eleventh visits, the notable outcomes to date, and the current status of outstanding issues. The Council, at its Eightieth Session, took note of the report and the Secretariat's presentation in that regard, and requested that the Secretariat and the Syrian Arab Republic expedite their efforts to resolve the issues. The Council further requested that the Director-General report to it before its Eighty-First Session on the details of all unresolved issues, in particular those for which no further progress has been possible.

10. The DAT will continue its technical consultations and interviews with key principals from the Syrian chemical weapons programme on its next visit, which is scheduled for 2 to 12 November 2015.

Supplementary resources

11. The total contributions of EUR 50.3 million in the Syria Trust Fund for the Destruction of Chemical Weapons and the contributors thereto remain unchanged from the previous report.

Activities carried out with respect to the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission in Syria

12. The Fact-Finding Mission (FFM) continues to analyse information collected in the course of its most recent deployments. This includes information provided by the Syrian Arab Republic and from other sources alleging the use of toxic chemicals as weapons. The findings of the FFM are expected to be submitted to the Director-General before the end of October 2015, and will be shared with States Parties and also attached to his next monthly report to the United Nations Secretary-General in accordance with Council decision EC-M-48/DEC.1.

13. The OPCW is actively supporting the commencement of the work of the Joint Investigative Mechanism established under United Nations Security Council resolution 2235 (2015). The Organization is providing specific technical and analytical expertise to the Mechanism, which is expected to become operational in early November 2015.

Conclusion

14. The main focus of the future activities of the OPCW Mission in the Syrian Arab Republic will be on the DAT and FFM activities, as well as the destruction and verification of the remaining aircraft hangar.

United Nations S/2015/821

Security Council

Distr.: General
4 November 2015
English
Original: Arabic

Identical letters dated 26 October 2015 from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

On instructions from my Government, I should like to convey to you the position of the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic regarding the twentieth report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Security Council resolutions 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014) and 2191 (2014) (S/2015/813).

At the outset, the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic would like to reiterate the position that it has already conveyed in detail to both the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council in previous identical letters regarding the implementation of Security Council resolutions 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014) and 2191 (2014). It would also like to stress the following points:

1. The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic finds it regrettable that, although 20 months have passed since the Secretary-General began submitting reports on the topic, the authors have yet again taken a biased and politicized approach to the humanitarian situation in Syria. In so doing, they give the impression that the United Nations has abandoned its neutrality and become an antagonist to the Syrian State. Their skewed reports rely on sources and information that have been shown to lack transparency, credibility or accuracy, and whose sole aim is to tarnish the reputation of the Syrian Government. The facts available from reliable sources, including those provided by the Syrian Government, disprove that narrative. They highlight the numbers of civilians who have become the victims of armed terrorist groups and those who are besieged in various areas, such as Dayr al-Zawr, Kafraya, Fu'ah, Nubul and Zahra' and Yarmouk camp. They also show that such terrorist organizations as Ahrar al-Sham, Army of Conquest and the Islamic Front — which have thousands of foreign terrorist fighters — are connected to Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), the Nusrah Front and Al-Qaida, and receive logistical, political and intelligence support from certain well-known States, particularly Turkey, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Israel.

2. The Syrian Government deplores the fact that the authors deliberately neglect to state clearly which parties have rejected all political initiatives aimed at resolving the crisis in Syria. Those parties rejected the initiative of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, Staffan de Mistura, to establish the four working groups. Likewise, the authors fail to mention that the Syrian Government accepted the initiative, as the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Emigrants stated before the

General Assembly on 2 October 2015. The Syrian Government also finds it deplorable that the Secretary-General fails to recognize that what he refers to as the root causes of the conflict lie ultimately in terrorism and multinational armed terrorist groups. In paragraph 67, the Secretary-General seeks to amend and re-prioritize the provisions of the Geneva communiqué in an attempt to please the parties that are supporting, funding and training the armed terrorist groups in Syria. The Syrian Government reiterates that stakeholders must cooperate and coordinate with it in order to combat, suppress and eradicate terrorism in Syria. That outcome would pave the way for a political solution to the crisis in Syria; the opposite does not apply.

3. Syria finds it regrettable that, in paragraph 66, the authors take a superficial approach to the issue of Syrian refugees in Europe. They turn a blind eye to the true causes of the refugees' departure, namely the terrorist war against the very existence of the Syrian State, people and land, a war that is backed from abroad and, indeed, is being waged with clear and unequivocal foreign support. This war seeks to destroy the country's infrastructure, economic facilities and public and private property, not to mention historic and cultural landmarks and antiquities. In addition, the unilateral coercive measures imposed on Syria by certain States have had a negative impact on all aspects of life, affecting ordinary citizens in the most basic aspects of their daily livelihoods. It is saddening that the Secretariat of the United Nations deliberately neglects to mention the repercussions of those measures in any of its reports, even though the measures violate the Charter of the United Nations and the rules of international law. Before 2011, there was no flow of Syrian refugees to any part of the world. On the contrary, Syria was a haven for refugees from many countries. In numerous instances, refugee movements have become a profitable trade managed by brokers of the armed terrorist groups. In the town of Ushah in Dar'a governorate, adjacent to the occupied Syrian Golan, human trafficking brokers register people and bring them to Germany through Haifa, acting in cooperation with the Israeli intelligence services.

The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic emphasizes that it continues to deal with the repercussions of the displacement caused by the crimes of terrorists who come from more than 100 countries. Every single terrorist take-over of a city, town or village has caused waves of civilians to look for safety in the areas controlled by the Syrian State. The United Nations can confirm that fact through the offices of its agencies that are supporting relief efforts in Syria. The Syrian Government reiterates that close cooperation and coordination with it in countering terrorism will help reduce the number of persons displaced as a result of emergencies and the number of asylum seekers, and mitigate the repercussions thereof.

4. The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic is surprised that the authors of the report have persisted in concocting yet more obfuscatory terminology. By including such terms in the report, they seek to manipulate and twist the counter-terrorism resolutions of the Security Council. In order to describe ISIL, the Nusrah Front and other armed groups associated with Al-Qaida, they first invented the term "armed opposition", then "moderate armed opposition", then "armed non-State groups" and, last but not least, "armed non-State opposition groups", as in paragraph 3 of the current report. That approach constitutes a flagrant violation of the Security Council counter-terrorism resolutions. Indeed, the report fails to mention those resolutions, as though their implementation were none of the

Secretariat's business. The Secretariat has shamefully contravened the Charter, which the United Nations has a responsibility to uphold. We once again wish to ask the Secretariat about its legal grounds for choosing this latest name, "armed non-State opposition groups", especially as the report itself states in numerous paragraphs that the armed groups have paired up with the terrorist Nusrah Front to form the so-called Army of Conquest, and that those groups have targeted and killed defenceless civilians. How can such terms be reconciled with the facts? We wish to reaffirm that when the Secretariat persists in such an approach, it sends a strong message of encouragement to the terrorists and States such as Turkey, Saudi Arabia and France, which support and finance them, to continue to commit their crimes and provide cover for their terrorism.

5. The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic has proved profoundly aware of its constitutional and moral duties. In order to preserve the lives of innocent civilians, it has carried through numerous national reconciliation processes. It has encouraged the armed men to hand over their weapons and ammunition to the competent Syrian authorities in return for an amnesty and the restoration of peace and security in the villages and towns where the armed men have barricaded themselves using defenceless civilians as human shields. At the request of the United Nations, the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic delivered assistance, including medical aid, to the inhabitants of the towns of Fu'ah and Kafraya in Idlib governorate, the towns of Zabadani and Madaya in Rif Dimashq governorate, and in other surrounding towns and villages. Its purpose in so doing was to protect and preserve the lives of its citizens in those locations. The first instalment of humanitarian assistance, medical supplies and food has reached the villages, and efforts are under way to carry out the second phase of the agreement. We wish to make it clear that the United Nations and international organizations could not have delivered the assistance without the cooperation of the Syrian Government and its competent agencies, as well as the Syrian Arab Red Crescent.

6. Paragraph 4 of the report states that civilians were killed in the Russian air strikes in Syria. That information came from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, which has become a mouthpiece for organizations and individuals openly associated with the terrorists and their organizations. The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic deplores and condemns the use of such misinformation. The Russian air operations began three weeks ago. Since that time, there have been more 960 sorties, which have targeted the terrorists' infrastructure and meeting points, the camps where they train and shelter, the warehouses where they store weapons and the workshops where they manufacture explosives and car bombs. The operations have had outstanding results. They have weakened and reduced the capacities of ISIL, the Nusrah Front and other terrorist organizations. The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic denies in whole and in part any allegation that the Russian Air Force operations have caused any civilian losses. The actions of the Russian Air Force have taken place at the request of the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic and with its full consent. They have been consistent with international law, the Charter of the United Nations and the authoritative international resolutions, including resolutions 2170 (2014), 2178 (2014) and 2199 (2015). The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic further wishes to state that Russian support led to the liberation of numerous villages and territories that had been under the control of ISIL, the Nusrah Front and other terrorist groups associated with Al-Qaida.

7. The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic wishes to highlight that the authors of the report have forgotten, or have wilfully and deliberately neglected, the sorties of the so-called coalition, of which there have been more than 6,000 over the last year. Those air operations are ostensibly aimed at fighting ISIL, but have failed to fulfil their objectives; instead, they have helped ISIL and other terrorist organizations to proliferate, under the very eyes of the coalition forces. The truth that the authors seek to obscure — other than the failure of the coalition's air strikes — is that they have targeted the infrastructure, services, petrol and gas installations, electrical power stations and factories, with the aim of destroying the resources of the Syrian people and impeding its exercise of the right to development and life with dignity. Those operations have also killed numerous civilians, and they have been the subject of numerous letters to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council.

8. The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic finds it deplorable that the report has, yet again, adopted an approach that is misconceived, politicized and prejudiced against it. The Government reiterates its rejection of the authors' attempts to deny the right, indeed, the constitutional duty, of the State to counter multinational terrorism and its right to defend the safety and unity of its territory and the safety and security of its people. That right is guaranteed to it and to other States under the Charter of the United Nations, international law and the relevant Security Council resolutions. It is only natural that the Government should order its national army and armed forces to respond to those terrorists and, in particular, strike the positions from which they attack defenceless residential neighbourhoods. Any talk of targeting public squares and markets runs counter to the truth. Such events occurred only in the minds of those who are spreading lies and slander regarding the events in Syria, in an endeavour to distort the facts and deny the legitimate right of the Syrian Government to defend itself and protect its people and land from armed terrorist groups. The most telling sign of the falsehood of that allegation is that civilians have been fleeing from areas overrun by armed terrorist groups to areas that are under the protection of the Syrian Arab Army. Examples are plentiful. It has happened with the populations of Idlib, Qaryatayn, Tadmur (Palmyra), Hasakah and elsewhere. Annex I lists some of the crimes committed by ISIL, the Nusrah Front, the Free Army, the Army of Islam, the Army of Conquest and other armed terrorist groups.

9. The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic notes once again that in certain paragraphs of the report, concerning the provision of humanitarian assistance, the authors have, however tentatively, come closer to reflecting the facts on the ground by acknowledging the efforts of the Syrian Government to provide humanitarian assistance to its citizens affected by the crisis, wherever they may be, in spite of the terrorist war being waged against the Syrian State. The Syrian Government reiterates its hope that this is a harbinger of a new approach by the Secretariat to political questions in its future reports. The Government reaffirms its commitment to delivering humanitarian assistance to persons affected by the crisis in all Syrian governorates, without discrimination, and to cooperate with the United Nations and its agencies in that regard, in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, the rules of international law and the guiding principles for humanitarian emergency assistance set forth in General Assembly resolution 46/182.

10. The Government expresses reservations about paragraphs 40 and 41, which overstate the number of requests submitted by the United Nations for access to hotspots by combining old requests with new ones and including among the latter repeat requests for access to certain areas, or requests that have already been approved but not yet acted on, such as for Arbin in Rif Dimashq governorate, and other areas that the United Nations has thus far been unable to reach, such as Nubul, Zahra' and Afrin in Aleppo governorate. The Syrian Government would like to know the benefit of approving United Nations requests for joint assistance convoys to hotspots, when half of such approvals previously granted were not acted on, for reasons that are open to debate. Is the aim merely to fill pages and create more paperwork? The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic stresses that the reasons given by the United Nations for not being able to deliver to hotspots are also taken into consideration by the Syrian side when it decides to deny certain requests. It takes into account a number of considerations, the most important being the security situation on the ground, the security and safety of humanitarian workers, ensuring that humanitarian assistance is delivered to its rightful recipients and that it does not fall into the hands of the armed terrorist groups, which are widespread in hotspots, as that would help prolong those groups' lease on life and the suffering they inflict on civilians. The persistence of such inaccurate reports will raise serious questions regarding the credibility of those organizations' interactions with the Syrian side.

11. The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic finds it deplorable that the United Nations has increased the volume of cross-border assistance while decreasing the amount of assistance delivered from inside Syria to those who truly need it. The Government reiterates its position that the so-called delivery of cross-border assistance is ineffective. It has several reasons for doing so. First of all, the United Nations does not have the means to verify that the assistance reaches its rightful recipients. Moreover, most of the information contained in the report is inaccurate. The Secretariat insists on manipulating and inflating the figures by including all of the cross-border assistance that was brought in over the course of more than a year. This is the case with the figures in presented in paragraphs 31 and 32 of the report under consideration and other figures and information in previous reports by the Secretary-General, and it is part of an effort to politicize humanitarian issues. The inhabitants of areas that are supposed to receive "cross-border assistance" continually inform us that the assistance is falling into the hands or under the control of armed terrorist groups, which either sell it at outrageous, exorbitant prices or provide it only to their supporters. We challenge the parties that deliver the assistance to specify exactly which parties took receipt of it!

12. The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic repudiates the baseless allegations that the authors have included in the report. Those allegations originate with parties that are well known for their lack of transparency and credibility and for their bias, and whose aim is to tarnish the reputation of the Syrian Government. Events of the past four years have shown that the Syrian Government has taken sound decisions, acted in earnest and strived to protect the lives of its citizens, whether in relation to humanitarian issues or counter-terrorism. The Syrian Government reiterates that it rejects the information put forward by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. The latter is embracing the allegations and statements made by those who support terrorists in Syria. In so doing, it has shown a clear case of bias and distorted its own mandate.

13. The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic emphasizes that Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Israel and Western States have provided the armed terrorist groups with weapons, funds, materiel, medical treatment, training and logistical support. Their actions have made possible the repeated and horrific crimes against humans and humanity that have taken place in Syria over the last four and a half years. Most recently, ISIL, the Nusrah Front and other groups associated with or derived from Al-Qaida, such as Ahrar al-Sham and Army of Conquest, have committed terrorist crimes against Syrians, particularly women and children. They have used car bombs, suicide bombers, missiles, shells and gas cylinders. They struck in Hasakah on 14 September 2015, in Aleppo on 15 September 2015, in Fu'ah and Kafraya in Idlib governorate, and in Homs. They have continually and systematically attacked the Syria's historic world heritage sights in Palmyra and other parts of the country. Those terrorist crimes have been described in official letters from the Syrian Government to the Secretary-General and the Security Council.

14. Particularly in paragraphs 5 and 11 of the report, the authors persist in giving a generalized, superficial account intended to downplay the vicious crimes of such armed terrorist groups as ISIL, the Nusrah Front, the Army of Conquest, the Army of Islam, the Free Army and Ahrar al-Sham. The Syrian Government is no longer even dismayed at that approach, as the authors have no objectivity and no antipathy towards terrorism. These heinous crimes could not have been committed without generous foreign support for those groups and the existence of intelligence and military operations rooms, such as those that were set up in Turkey and Jordan, that provide logistical and operational support to the groups and instruct them to continue their crimes against the Syrian people and destroy the people's capacities. They were also made possible by the all-but-open airlifting of supplies by the air forces of coalition States, particularly the United States of America, which have delivered dozens of containers of high-grade weapons and ammunition.

15. The Syrian Government reiterates its previous statements about the importance of coordination between it and the United Nations in determining the number of affected persons and their humanitarian needs, because it is in a better position to provide those numbers. Accordingly, by inflating or reducing figures, the report's authors do not serve the noble purpose of responding to the urgent humanitarian needs of affected persons, particularly in hotspots. For example, the number of civilians besieged by ISIL in Dayr al-Zawr is 300,000, not 228,000, while the number of persons besieged by Ahrar al-Sham and the Nusrah Front in Fu'ah and Kafraya is 35,000. Clearly, stating the actual numbers does not serve the purposes of those who want to misguide the members of the Security Council and others regarding the reality of the situation in Syria.

16. The information set out in paragraph 43, concerning the granting of visas to United Nations staff members and delegations, is inaccurate. The Syrian side has in fact approved almost all of the requests that were made.

17. Despite the politicization of humanitarian issues, the Syrian Government continues to cooperate with the United Nations agencies, funds and programmes operating in Syria. The World Food Programme (WFP) was able to deliver assistance from inside Syrian territory to approximately 3,248,590 beneficiaries. It was able to do so despite the challenges facing humanitarian work, above all inadequate funding for the 2015 Strategic Response Plan for the Syrian Arab Republic, which is only 32 per cent funded to date, according to the United Nations.

The Government has also maintained its own relief efforts. It has delivered humanitarian assistance to areas that the United Nations was unable to reach, such as Nubul and Zahra' and Dayr al-Zawr. It has also delivered medical supplies: for example, the Syrian Arab Red Crescent established a new clinic in the Mu'addamiyah area in order to provide health care to the inhabitants.

Annex II contains examples of humanitarian assistance that was delivered thanks to the facilitation provided by the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations and other international organizations in cooperation with the Syrian Arab Red Crescent. It also lists assistance delivered by the Syrian Arab Red Crescent.

18. The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic reaffirms that suppressing and combating terrorism requires a strong sense of purpose and an unwavering international commitment. In that connection, the Government reiterates its previous calls to cooperate and coordinate with it in order to combat and suppress terrorism, halt the funding of terrorism, shut down the terrorist training camps located throughout neighbouring countries and implement the Security Council resolutions concerning counter-terrorism, particularly resolutions 2170 (2014), 2178 (2014) and 2199 (2015).

19. The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic reaffirms its position that the crisis in Syria requires a political solution based on dialogue among Syrians under Syrian leadership, without any outside intervention.

20. I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annexes circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Bashar **Ja'afari**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

Annex I to the identical letters dated 26 October 2015 from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

Crimes committed by ISIL, the Nusrah Front, the Free Army, the Army of Islam, the Army of Conquest, the Mujahidin Army, the Badr Martyrs Brigade, the Nur al-Din al-Zanki battalion and other armed terrorist groups ignored by the authors of the report

- During the period from 21 August 2015 to 21 October 2015, terrorists killed 473 civilians, including 91 children, and injured 1,439 civilians, including 232 children, across the governorates of Syria, not including Raqqah, Idlib and Dayr al-Zawr.
- On 15 September 2015, armed terrorist groups belonging to the so-called Army of Mujahidin, the Badr Martyrs Brigade, the Nusrah Front, the Nur al-Din al-Zanki battalion and other terrorist organizations fired a large number of missiles and explosive rockets at several areas of Aleppo city, including Furqan and Hamdaniyah. The attacks killed 31 civilians, of whom 13 were children, 3 were women and 15 were men and old men. More than 135 civilians were injured, most of them women, children and the elderly. There was also extensive damage to public and private property.
- On 14 September 2015, two terrorist suicide bombers detonated car bombs at rush hour on in the Khasham and Mahattah neighbourhoods of Hasakah, killing more than 20 civilians and seriously injuring 100 others, most of them women and children. There was also serious damage to public and private property, and three residential buildings were destroyed.
- On 1 September 2015, armed terrorist groups shelled the Mechanical and Electrical Engineering Faculty in Damascus, killing one female student and injuring six others.
- On 1 September 2015, armed terrorist groups belonging to the terrorist organizations known as Army of Islam and the Rahman Corps located in parks in the towns of Duma and Harasta shelled the Assad quarter of Harasta, the Iskan quarter of the Wafidin camp and the Damascus-Homs highway at the Rahmah wal-Aman Billah petrol station. Three children sustained shrapnel wounds and material damage was caused.
- On 1 September 2015, armed terrorist groups belonging to the Nusrah Front, the Badr Martyrs Brigade and the Nur al-Din al-Zanki Battalion located in the Bani Zayd and Shaykh Maqsud neighbourhoods directed sniper fire, shells and gas cylinders at the Khalidiyah, Suryan al-Qadimah, Ashrafiyah and Hamdaniyah neighbourhoods of Aleppo, killing 14 people and causing material damage.
- On 2 September 2015, armed terrorist groups belonging to the terrorist organizations Nusrah Front, Army of Islam, Armies of the Levant and the Rahman Corps located in the Jawbar area and the eastern Ghutah fired shells and locally-made rockets at parts of Damascus, including the Faculty of

Mechanical and Electrical Engineering, the Qassa' park, Bab Tuma and the Salihiyah Gate market. Two university students were killed, 31 were injured and material damage was caused.

- On 2 September 2015, an unidentified armed terrorist group fired four missiles at the city of Jaramana, killing four civilians, injuring 46 others and causing material damage.
- On 2 September 2015, a car bomb exploded in the Hamam neighbourhood of Ladhiqiyah, killing three civilians, injuring 43 others and causing material damage.
- On 2 September 2015, an armed terrorist group affiliated with the Nusrah Front and located in the village of Balat fired four locally-made missiles towards the locality of Tall Urun in Aleppo, killing a civilian and injuring five others.
- On 3 September, an armed terrorist group affiliated with ISIL in the village of Aydun, in Homs, fired a shell at the village of Khunayfis. A woman and a child sustained shrapnel wounds and a house was damaged.
- On 3 September 2015, a terrorist group affiliated with the so-called Nusrah Front in Jabatha al-Khashab village fired seven tank shells, with back-up from the Israeli enemy, towards the village of Hadar in Qunaytirah. A woman and child sustained shrapnel wounds and some houses were damaged.
- On 4 September 2015, armed terrorist groups affiliated with the terrorist organizations known as the Nusrah Front, the Army of Islam, the Armies of the Levant and the Rahman Corps located in the Jawbar neighbourhood and the eastern Ghutah fired eight shells at the Qassa' neighbourhood of Damascus city. Five civilians, including women and children, sustained shrapnel wounds and material damage was caused.
- On 4 September 2015, six shells landed on Jaramana city, killing three civilians, inflicting shrapnel wounds on 12 others, including women and children, and causing material damage.
- On 4 September 2015, a car bomb exploded on the mountain road, and a second explosion took place in front of the National Hospital in Suwayda'. In the two explosions, 26 civilians were killed, 40 sustained shrapnel wounds and extensive material damage was caused.
- On 5 September 2015, armed terrorist groups affiliated with the so-called Nusrah Front, Badr Martyrs Brigade and Nur al-Din al-Zanki battalion located in the Bustan al-Basha neighbourhood of Aleppo fired a shell shaped like a gas cylinder at the Jabiriyah neighbourhood. Two children sustained shrapnel wounds and material damage was caused.
- On 5 September 2015, armed terrorist groups belonging to the terrorist organization ISIL located in the village of Subayhiyah, in Aleppo, fired missiles at the town of Safirah. Two civilians were killed and five other people were injured.
- On 6 September 2015, an armed terrorist group belonging to the so-called Army of Islam and the Rahman Corps located in the parks of Duma and Harasta fired 15 shells at the Ibn Sina mental hospital in Adra and at the Iskan

quarter and the Wafidin camp in Rif Dimashq. A woman was killed, four women patients sustained shrapnel wounds and material damage was caused to the hospital.

- On 6 September 2015, armed terrorist groups belonging to the so-called Nusrah Front, the Badr Martyrs Brigade and the Nur al-Din al-Zanki battalion located in the Bustan al-Basha neighbourhood of Aleppo fired a missile shaped like a gas cylinder at the Jabiriyah neighbourhood. A man and a woman sustained shrapnel wounds and material damage was caused.
- On 7 September 2015, six shells landed on the Qassa' area of Damascus, killing one person, injuring 13 others and causing material damage.
- On 7 September 2015, armed terrorist groups belonging to the so-called Nusrah Front, the Badr Martyrs Brigade and the Nur al-Din al-Zanki battalion located in the Bustan al-Basha neighbourhood of Aleppo fired a mortar shell at the Shahba' neighbourhood. One person sustained shrapnel wounds.
- On 7 September 2015, an armed terrorist group belonging to the so-called Nusrah Front and located in the Balat and Karyum villages, in Aleppo, fired 12 locally-made missiles at the village of Tall Urun. One woman was killed and some houses were damaged.
- On 8 September 2015, an armed terrorist group belonging to the so-called Nusrah Front and located in the Balat and Turaydim villages, in Aleppo, fired 10 locally-made missiles at the village of Tall Urun. One person was killed, 12 others were injured and some houses were damaged.
- On 9 September 2015, a mortar shell landed on King Faysal street in Damascus, killing three civilians, inflicting shrapnel wounds on five others and causing material damage.
- On 9 September 2015, a mortar shell landed on the Kallasah area, behind the Zahiriyah library in the old city of Damascus. One man and two women sustained shrapnel wounds and material damage was caused.
- On 9 September 2015, armed terrorist groups belonging to the so-called Army of Islam located in the parks of Duma fired four shells at the Biruni hospital and the Assad quarter in Harasta, in Rif Dimashq. The hospital building and some residential buildings were damaged.
- On 9 September 2015, an armed terrorist group belonging to the so-called Nusrah Front located in the Balat village, in Aleppo, fired three locally made missiles at the village of Tall Urun. One person was killed, 12 others were injured and some houses were damaged.
- On 10 September 2015, a mortar shell landed on the town of Sayyidah Zaynab, in Rif Dimashq, killing a girl and damaging a house.
- On 10 September 2015, an armed terrorist group affiliated with the Nusrah Front and positioned to the north-east of the town of Si 'in, in Hamah, fired more than 30 shells at the village. Five people sustained shrapnel wounds and material damage was caused.
- On 10 September 2015, armed terrorist groups affiliated with the so-called Nusrah Front, Badr Martyrs Brigade and Nur al-Din al-Zanki battalion located

in the Bani Zayd neighbourhood of Aleppo fired a gas cylinder at the Ashrafiyah neighbourhood, inflicting shrapnel wounds on five people.

- On 11 September 2015, armed terrorist groups affiliated with the Nusrah Front, the Army of Islam, the Armies of the Levant and the Rahman Corps located in the Jawbar neighbourhood and the eastern Ghutah fired shells and locally-made missiles at neighbourhoods of Damascus, including the Buzuriyah market, the Grand Umayyad Mosque, the surroundings of the Church of Our Lady of Damascus and Masakin Barzeh. Two people were injured and extensive material damage was caused.

- On 11 September 2015, an armed terrorist group affiliated with the so-called Army of Islam, the Nusrah Front, the Armies of the Levant, Rahman Corps and Ahrar al-Sham, which were located in the Duma parks and Harasta, fired shells and locally-made missiles at the Assad quarter of Harasta and the Wafidin camp in Rif Dimashq. Nine civilians were killed and material damage was caused.

- On 11 September 2015, shells of an unidentified type landed around the Ma'runah area in Tall district of Rif Dimashq, inflicting shrapnel wounds on a child.

- On 12 September 2015, armed terrorist groups belonging to the so-called Nusrah Front and the Army of Conquest located in Jabal al-Zawiyah, in Idlib, fired five missiles of an unidentified type at the village of Jid, without causing any injuries. They also fired three missiles of an unidentified type at the town of Aziziyah, killing one person and injuring a woman and four others.

- On 13 September 2015, armed terrorist groups belonging to the so-called Army of Islam, the Nusrah Front, the Armies of the Levant and the Rahman Corps located in the Jawbar neighbourhood and the eastern Ghutah fired shells and locally-made missiles at the city of Damascus. The targets included Mazra'ah; the Tijariyah secondary school behind the Dar al-Shifa' hospital; the Martyr Muhammad Rushdi Barakat school in Rukn al-Din; Imarah; and the area near the Umayyah secondary school in Qassa'. One person was killed, 11 were injured and extensive material damage was caused.

- On 14 September 2015, armed terrorist groups belonging to the so-called Army of Islam, the Nusrah Front, the Armies of the Levant and the Rahman Corps located in the Jawbar neighbourhood and the eastern Ghutah fired shells and locally-made missiles at neighbourhoods of Damascus. The targets included Shaykh Raslan, Adawi, the area near the Church of Our Lady of Damascus, Maliki and the alleyways of Salihiyah. Eight people were injured and extensive material damage was caused.

- On 14 September 2015, armed terrorist groups belonging to the so-called Nusrah Front, the Badr Brigade and the Nur al-Din al-Zanki battalion, which were located in the Bani Zayd and Rashidin al-Rabi'a neighbourhoods of Aleppo directed sniper fire, shells and gas cylinders at the neighbourhoods of Ashrafiyah, Nile street and Hamdaniyah. One person was killed, 31 civilians were injured and extensive material damage was caused.

- On 14 September 2015, armed terrorist groups belonging to the so-called ISIL organization located in Subayhiyah village fired three locally made missiles at

the town of Tall Urun. A boy was killed, three people were injured and material damage was caused.

- On 15 September 2015, armed terrorist groups belonging to the so-called Nusrah Front located in the town of Tall al-Ghurr and the village of Ayn Husayn South directed sniper fire at the village of Dananir, injuring one woman.
- On 16 September 2015, a car bomb exploded near the Safiyah school in the Zahra' neighbourhood, killing one person, inflicting shrapnel wounds on nine others and causing material damage.
- On 16 September 2015, armed terrorist groups belonging to the so-called Nusrah Front, the Badr Martyrs Brigade and the Nur al-Din al-Zanki battalion located in the Bani Zayd and Salah al-Din neighbourhoods directed sniper fire, shells and gas cylinders at neighbourhoods of the town of Duwwar Shayhan. Two people were killed; 10, including women and children, were injured; and material damage was caused.
- On 16 September 2015, armed terrorist groups belonging to the so-called Nusrah Front in Tall al-Riman in Aleppo fired four missiles at the Safirah area, killing a girl and inflicting shrapnel wounds on seven people.
- On 17 September 2015, an armed terrorist group belonging to the so-called Army of Islam, the Nusrah Front, the Armies of the Levant and the Rahman Corps, which were located in the Jawbar neighbourhood and the eastern Ghutah, fired shells and locally-made missiles at neighbourhoods of the city of Damascus, including Qusur and Suq al-Hal in Zablatani. A civilian was killed, four people were injured and extensive material damage was caused.
- On 17 September 2015, armed terrorist groups belonging to the so-called Army of Islam, the Nusrah Front and the Rahman Corps located in the parks of cities of Duma and Harasta fired more than 40 shells at the Assad quarter and its surroundings in Harasta. Two people were killed, 19 were injured and material damage was caused.
- On 17 September 2015, six shells landed inside the compound of Damascus International Airport, killing an airport worker and causing material damage.
- On 17 September 2015, armed terrorist groups belonging to the so-called Nusrah Front in the village of Tall Alam in Aleppo fired five missiles at Tall Urun, wounding one adult and two children and causing material damage.
- On 18 September 2015, an explosive device that had been planted in a rubbish sack opposite the Ahram hospital in Homs exploded. Five minutes later, another explosive device exploded some 40 metres away from the site of the first blast. One person was killed. 12 others were injured and material damage was caused.
- On 18 September 2015, armed terrorist groups belonging to the so-called Nusrah Front positioned in the villages of Abu al-Ghurr and Tinah, in Hamah, fired seven shells at the town of Si 'in, injuring a woman, a child and a man and causing material damage.
- On 18 September 2015, armed terrorist groups belonging to the so-called Nusrah Front, the Badr Martyrs Brigade and the Nur al-Din al-Zanki battalion

located in the Bani Zayd neighbourhood of Aleppo shelled the Ashrafiyah neighbourhood, killing one person, injuring 11 and causing material damage.

- On 19 September 2015, an armed terrorist groups belonging to the so-called Nusrah Front, the Badr Martyrs Brigade and the Nur al-Din al-Zanki battalion located in the Bustan al-Basha neighbourhood fired missiles shaped like gas cylinders at the Maydan area. 14 civilians were killed; 22 others, including women and children, sustained shrapnel wounds; and material damage was caused.

- On 20 September 2015, armed terrorist groups belonging to the so-called ISIL organization in the town fired three missiles at the town of Sadad in Homs, killing an adult and a child and causing material damage.

- On 20 September 2015, armed terrorist groups belonging to the so-called Nusrah Front in Aydun village in Hamah fired 15 shells at the village of Khunayfis, injuring four children and causing material damage.

- On 20 September 2015, armed terrorist groups belonging to the so-called Nusrah Front, the Badr Martyrs Brigade and the Nur al-Din al-Zanki battalion located in neighbourhoods within the city of Aleppo directed sniper fire, shells, locally-made missiles and gas cylinders at the neighbourhoods of Sayf al-Dawlah, Maysalun, Aziziyah, Halab al-Jadidah and Sayyid Ali. Two people were killed, 16 were injured and material damage was caused.

- On 21 September 2015, a shell landed on Suq al-Hal, in Zablatani, Damascus, killing one person and causing material damage.

- On 21 September 2015, armed terrorist groups belonging to the so-called Nusrah Front in the village of Ayn Husayn fired three shells at neighbourhoods of Homs, killing a child, inflicting shrapnel wounds on seven people and causing material damage.

- On 21 September 2015, armed terrorist groups belonging to the so-called ISIL organization in Balat village, in Aleppo, fired five missiles at the town of Tall Urun, inflicting shrapnel wounds on three people and causing material damage.

- On 22 September 2015, a civilian car bomb exploded in the north of the Zahra' neighbourhood in Homs, killing one person, inflicting shrapnel wounds on 13 others and causing material damage.

- On 22 September 2015, armed terrorist groups belonging to the so-called ISIL organization in Balat village, in Aleppo, fired four missiles at the town of Tall Urun, killing an adult and a child, inflicting shrapnel wounds on another person and causing material damage.

- On 23 September 2015, an explosive device that had been planted under a civilian minibus exploded in Hadarah street, in the Ikrimah al-Jadidah neighbourhood. A woman was killed, eight people were injured and material damage was caused.

- On 23 September 2015, armed terrorist groups belonging to the so-called Nusrah Front, the Badr Martyrs Brigade and the Nur al-Din al-Zanki battalion, which were located in Subayhah village and the Amiriyah, Bani Zayd and Bustan al-Basha neighbourhoods, fired locally made missiles and gas cylinders

at the neighbourhoods of Safirah, Ramusah and Maydan. Two people were killed, 12 were injured and material damage was caused.

- On 23 September 2015, armed terrorist groups belonging to the so-called ISIL organization located around the towns of Nubul and Zahra' fired locally made missiles at the towns. Four people were killed, nine were injured and material damage was caused.
- On 24 September 2015, two shells landed on the Iwa' school in the Wafidin camp, inflicting shrapnel wounds on one adult and six children and causing material damage.
- On 24 September 2015, armed terrorist groups belonging to the so-called ISIL organization located around the towns of Nubul and Zahra' fired locally made missiles at the towns. One person died, 15 were injured and material damage was caused.
- On 24 September 2015, armed terrorist groups belonging to the so-called Nusrah Front in the woodland of Jabatha al-Khashab fired two tank shells at the village of Hadar, in Qunaytirah, inflicting shrapnel wounds on two children and causing material damage.
- On 26 September 2015, armed terrorist groups belonging to the so-called Nusrah Front in the village of Hamidiyah and the town of Jabatha al-Khashab shelled the towns of Ba'th and Khan Arnabah in Qunaytirah governorate, inflicting shrapnel wounds on five people and causing material damage.
- On 26 September 2015, armed terrorist groups belonging to the so-called Army of Islam, the Nusrah Front, the Rahman Corps and the Army of the Ummah, which were located in the parks of Duma and Harasta, in the governorate of Rif Dimashq, shelled the Assad quarter in Harasta. A girl was killed and material damage was caused.
- On 26 September 2015, armed terrorist groups belonging to the so-called Nusrah Front fired eight shells at the village of Ghawr al-Asi in Homs, injuring one person and causing material damage.
- On 26 September 2015, armed terrorist groups belonging to the so-called Nusrah Front in the village of Ayn Husayn North fired three missiles at the village of Ayn al-Dananir in Homs governorate. An adult and a child were injured and material damage was caused.
- On 26 September 2015, armed terrorist groups belonging to the so-called Nusrah Front, the Badr Martyrs Brigade and the Nur al-Din al-Zanki battalion, which were located within neighbourhoods of Aleppo, directed sniper fire, shells and gas cylinders at the neighbourhoods of Mushariqah, Salah al-Din and the Hamdaniyah motorway in Aleppo governorate. Six people were injured and material damage was caused.
- On 26 September 2015, armed terrorist groups belonging to the so-called Nusrah Front in the woodland of Jabatha al-Khashab fired ten shells and tank shells at the town of Hadar, in Qunaytirah governorate. Three people were injured and material damage was caused.
- On 27 September 2015, armed terrorist groups belonging to the so-called Nusrah Front located on the north side of Homs fired Grad missiles at the

neighbourhoods of Jubb al-Jandali, Zahra', Ikrimah, Karm al-Zaytun and Wadi al-Dhahab in the city of Homs. A woman and a child were killed, eight people sustained shrapnel wounds and material damage was caused.

- On 27 September 2015, armed terrorist groups belonging to the so-called Nusrah Front in the Wa'r area shelled the town of Mulahi in Homs governorate. Four people were killed and 22 sustained shrapnel wounds.
- On 27 September 2015, armed terrorist groups belonging to the so-called ISIL organization in the village of Balat fired six locally-made missiles at the town of Tall Urun in Aleppo governorate. Four people sustained shrapnel wounds and material damage was caused.
- On 27 September 2015, armed terrorist groups belonging to the so-called Nusrah Front in the towns of Hamidiyah and Jabatha al-Khashab shelled the town of Khan al-Arnabah and the city of Ba'th in Qunaytirah. Six people sustained shrapnel wounds and material damage was caused.
- On 29 September 2015, armed terrorist groups belonging to the Nusrah Front, the Army of Islam and the Rahman Corps located in the Jawbar neighbourhood and the eastern Ghutah fired shells and locally made missiles at neighbourhoods of Damascus. One person was killed, 12 sustained shrapnel wounds and material damage was caused.
- On 29 September 2015, armed terrorist groups belonging to the so-called Confederation of Glory and the Nusrah Front, which were located north of the village of Abu Ubaydah and west of the town of Lataminah, fired more than 13 missiles at the town of Muhradah in Hamah governorate. One woman sustained shrapnel wounds and material damage was caused.
- On 30 September 2015, armed terrorist groups belonging to the so-called Nusrah Front, the Army of Islam and the Rahman Corps, which were located in the Jawbar neighbourhood and the eastern Ghutah, fired shells and locally made missiles at neighbourhoods of Damascus, including Mazzah. Three people sustained shrapnel wounds and material damage was caused.
- On 30 September 2015, armed terrorist groups belonging to the so-called Nusrah Front, the Badr Martyrs Brigade and the Nur al-Din al-Zanki battalion, which were located in the Bani Zayd and Old Aleppo neighbourhoods, directed sniper fire, shells and gas cylinders at the neighbourhoods of Maydan, Ashrafiyah, Shaykh Maqsud, Bab al-Faraj and Mushariqah. Fifteen people sustained shrapnel wounds and material damage was caused.

Annex II to the identical letters dated 26 October 2015 from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

Examples of humanitarian assistance that was delivered during September 2015 thanks to the facilitation provided by the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations and other international organizations in cooperation with the Syrian Arab Red Crescent. Also listed is assistance delivered by the Syrian Arab Red Crescent.

The Syrian Arab Red Crescent delivered humanitarian aid (food and non-food aid and medical assistance), provided from inside Syrian territory by the majority of United Nations organizations, to various governorates, including Rif Dimashq, Qunaytirah, Hasakah, Aleppo and Dar'a, but not to Raqqah, Dayr al-Zawr or Idlib governorates. Some 3,248,590 Syrian beneficiaries (649,718 families) received food parcels provided by WFP from inside Syrian territory that were distributed by the Syrian Arab Red Crescent and local non-governmental organizations. Some 55,800 parcels were delivered to Rif Dimashq, 16,944 parcels to Dar'a and its countryside, 6,802 parcels to Qunaytirah, 62,428 parcels to Aleppo and its countryside, 16,092 parcels to Hasakah, 76,802 parcels to Homs and its countryside, 44,409 parcels to Hama and its countryside and 31,639 parcels to Ladhiqiyah and its countryside.

The Syrian Arab Red Crescent delivered humanitarian aid provided by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) from inside Syrian territory to most governorates, including Rif Dimashq, Idlib, Hama, Dar'a, Qunaytirah, Aleppo, Homs and Hama. A total of 80,723 food parcels, 52,562 parcels of canned goods, 68,694 food rations in bulk (community kitchens) and other food items were distributed to approximately 33,000 beneficiaries in Hama, Rif Dimashq, Ladhiqiyah and Aleppo. In addition, medical supplies were delivered to Homs and 18,601 food parcels provided by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies were distributed to in Homs, Aleppo and Damascus governorates.

The Syrian Arab Red Crescent delivered humanitarian aid (food and non-food aid and medical assistance) provided by foreign non-governmental organizations operating in Syria to Aleppo, Rif Dimashq, Dar'a, Qunaytirah, Hama, Homs, Suwayda' and Tartus governorates, benefiting tens of thousands of families.

The Syrian Arab Red Crescent delivered medical assistance provided by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Population Fund to Aleppo, Homs and Tartus.

The Syrian Government authorized United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East to bring medical supplies into the Yalda area, to contain the spread of typhoid, and to bring in a mobile clinic three times a week and a dental unit two times a week.

WHO was able to deliver medical treatment, medication and medical equipment to hundreds of thousands of beneficiaries in most Syrian governorates. The two requests made by WHO to once again provide dialysis sessions in Duma are being considered with due attention.

The Syrian Government renewed its approval for WFP to bring humanitarian assistance through the Nusaybin crossing on the Syrian-Turkish border, in order to allow 48,434 food rations and 20 tons of peanut butter to be brought and distributed to beneficiaries in the governorate during September 2015.